



GROUNDED LEARNING

people-centred approaches to
housing in Yangon and Yogyakarta

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London, 2020

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Community Architects Network (CAN)

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ISBN 978-1-9993124-1-1

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Acronyms

ACCA	Asian Coalition for Community Action
ACHR	Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
AMA	Association of Myanmar Architects
BAL	Basic Agrarian Law (Law No. 5/1960)
Bappenas	Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional (National Development Planning Agency)
BPN	Badan Pertanahan Nasional (National Land Agency)
BP2BT	Bantuan Pembiayaan Perumahan Berbasis Tabungan (Savings-Based Housing Finance Assistance)
BSPS	Bantuan Stimulan Perumahan Swadaya (Home Improvement Assistance Programme)
CAN	Community Architects Network
CBD	Central Business District
CBP	Community Bithukar Platform (Community Architects Platform)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DIY	Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta Special Region: Yogyakarta, Sleman, Bantul, Gunung Kidul, Kulon Progo)
DPK	Dana Pengembangan Komunitas (Community Development Fund)
DPU	Development Planning Unit
DUHD	Department of Urban and Housing Development
FLPP	Fasilitas Likuiditas Pembiayaan Perumahan (Housing Finance Liquidity Facility)
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KHMF	KEB Hana Microfinance
KIP	Kampung Improvement Programme
KOTAKU	Kota Tanpa Kumuh (Cities without Slums, national programme)
KPY	Kawasan Perkotaan Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta Urban Area: Yogyakarta, Sleman, Bantul)
KTP	Kartu Tanda Penduduk (ID Card)
LUC	Land Use Certificate
MBR	Masyarakat Berpenghasilan Rendah (Low Income Households)
MFI	Microfinance Institutions
MoC	Ministry of Construction
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NLD	National League for Democracy
PSMP	Pembiayaan Swadaya Mikro Perumahan (Housing Micro Self-Financing)
PSU	Prasarana, Sarana dan Utilitas (Infrastructure, Facilities and Public Utilities)
Perumahan	Pendaftaran Tanah Sistematis Lengkap (Complete Systematic Land Registration Programme)
PTSL	Pekerjaan Umum dan Perumahan Rakyat (Ministry of Public Works and Housing)
PUPR	Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional (National Medium-Term Development Plan)
RPJMN	Rukun Tetangga (Division of neighbourhood groups in an RW)

RTHP	Ruang Terbuka Hijau Publik (Green Open Public Space)
Rusunami	Rumah Susun Serderhana Milik (Low-Cost Flats for Purchase)
Rusunawa	Rumah Susun Sederhana Sewa (Low-Cost Rental Flats)
Rusus	Rumah Khusus (Special Houses)
RW	Rukun Warga (Division of community groups in an administrative village)
SBUM	Subsidi Bantuan Uang Muka (Advanced Payment Assistance Subsidy)
SEA	South East Asia
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
SSA	Skema Selisih Angsuran (Installment Discrepancy Subsidy)
SSB	Subsidi Selisih Bunga (Interest Discrepancy Subsidy)
UCL	University College London
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UPCA	Urban Poor Coalition Asia
VFV	Vacant, Fallow and Virgin
WfW	Women for the World
WSDN	Women's Saving and Development Network
WY TU	West Yangon Technological University
WSG	Women's Saving Group
YC DC	Yangon City Development Committee
YRG	Yangon Regional Government
YTU	Yangon Technological University

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Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincerest gratitude to everyone who has played a part in the DPU/ACHR/CAN fellowship programme this year. To the DPU, particularly Dr. Barbara Lipietz, Dr. Catalina Ortiz, Timothy Wickson, and Azadeh Mashayekhi, thank you for guiding, encouraging, and above all, trusting in us. To ACHR and CAN, thank you for inspiring us, and providing us with the opportunity to learn and grow as development practitioners ourselves.

To Women for the World,

Thank you, Lizar, for sharing many lessons with us, for encouraging us to explore and for guiding us. Thank you to the wonderful WfW team, Wah Phaw, Hanni Kyaw, Eaint Eaint, Mu Eh, Htet Htet Lin. We are grateful to have worked with you, have learnt so much from you, and thank you for your patience and efforts to integrate us.

Thank you to all the amazing women in each and every community we have visited and worked with. Thank you for hosting us countless times in your homes and communities, for always being energetic in our activities, for answering our questions and raising yours, for inspiring us.

To the extended BUDD network in Yangon,

Thank you, Shoko, for your guidance, positive spirit, and the endless support in times of confusion. Your groundedness and creativity made all the difference! Thank you for sharing your insights, and bringing balance to the busiest of days. Witee and Sapto, we have cherished every moment of your presence in Yangon; thank you for injecting energy, inspiration and concentrated learnings into our work.

To the ever-rocking CX3-Team,

Aung Zaw Moe, Kaung Myat, Freeze, Kyi Kyi, Ko Phy, Yan Naing, Chan Myae, Hein Htet, Shin Pa, Salai Van, Min Khant, Suye, and many more from the Community Bithukar Platform, the Yangon Technological University and elsewhere; thank you for all the hard work and all the fun during our stay in Myanmar, it has been a blast.

Fig 2. (facing page) Tea shop on the streets of downtown Yangon.

To Arkom,

Thank you for being such warm hosts. Thank you for taking the time to share, for answering all our questions so earnestly, for always being patient, and for proving to us that hard-work and good-fun are not mutually exclusive. We will always cherish our time in Yogyakarta, and will remain forever grateful to have worked with, and learnt from, you.

To the ibu ibu of Kalijawi,

Terima Kasih. Thank you for welcoming us into your homes. For sharing your stories with us. And for trusting us to handle them with care. Thank you for inspiring us. And for showing us what the power of a collective really looks like. Lastly, thank you for feeding us –we will be back for more.

To all our other partners and friends in Yogyakarta,

Tia, Linda, Uzair, Bayu, the Pringgomukti community, our work would not have been possible without your added guidance and support. Your insights made working in the complex context of Yogyakarta easier, and your friendliness made it truly enjoyable. Thank you for everything.

To everyone else we worked with, thank you. We hope you enjoy this report, and hope to meet again one day.

Sincerely,

Marina Kolovou Kouri, Katrin Hofer, Nada Sallam, Aji Bima Amriza Amalsyah



Chapter I. **ON GROUNDED LEARNING**



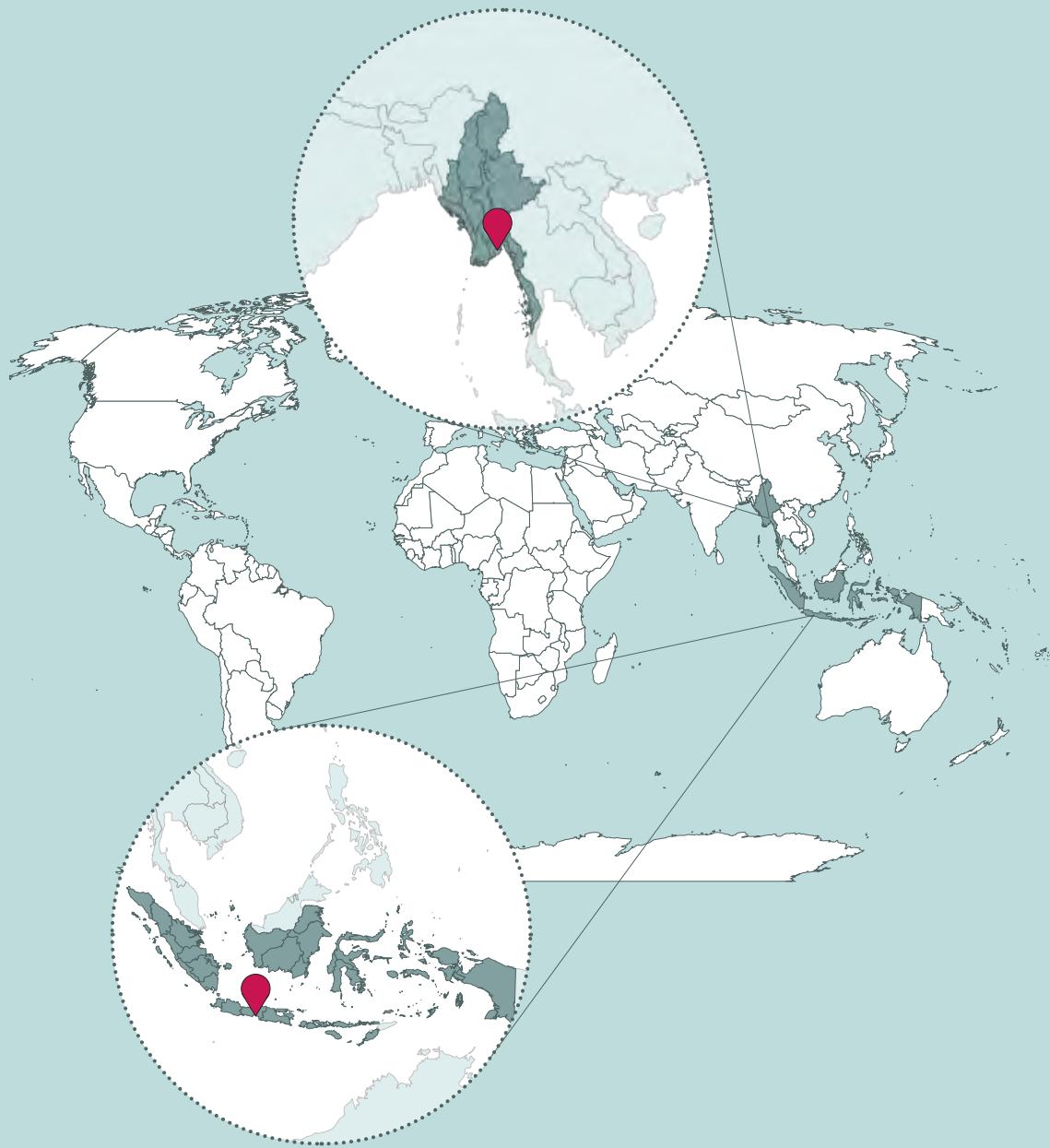
Introduction

This booklet is the fifth in a series of publications stemming from the **Development Planning Unit (DPU)** Alumni Fellowship Programme, which is supported by The Bartlett DPU in partnership with the **Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR)** and the **Community Architects Network (CAN)**. The fellowship programme aims to offer hands-on experience and training to young urban practitioners, and expose them to methodologies and tools used in development work with different communities. Within this context, four fellows were selected upon completion of their Master's programmes in *Building and Urban Design in Development* and *Urban Development Planning* to work respectively alongside the organisations **Women for the World (WfW)** in Yangon, Myanmar, and **Arkomjogja** in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Building on the plethora of learnings and practices documented by the previous waves of fellows on the operation of community-based development practitioners in the region of Southeast Asia (SEA), this report sets out to make a further contribution to the existing body of knowledge, by recording the work of the WfW and Arkomjogja, and reflecting on the role of people-centred practices in urban development. Through this publication the fellows share their experience of community-based practice, position their learnings within a broader context of socio-spatial change, and reflect on the challenges and opportunities of people-centred approaches.

Both organisations have been undergoing changes in the scope and scale of their work –and by extent their potential impact. As such, this report explores two guiding questions: *How are these community-based organisations navigating the bridging of scales? And how do they pursue alternative trajectories to the mainstream development trends of their respective contexts?* The *bridging of scales* can be understood as a multi-layered concept; comprising the links between communities and the city, and between communities in general (vertical and horizontal links), but also the shifts in the actual extent of the organisations' activities and their changing impact –not only in numerical terms, but in setting precedents for social and spatial justice. In doing so, alternative pathways to people-centred development are continuously pursued by practitioners, who increasingly

Fig 3. (facing page) Everyday life in a kampung in Yogyakarta.



(need to) employ more integrated strategies for systemic change; such courses of development are explored under the question on *alternative trajectories*.

Structure

The report begins by outlining the core themes that shaped its focus, and providing an overview of the two organisations' areas of operation, principles and vision. This section is followed by an elaboration on existing patterns of urban and housing development, situated in the recent history and socio-political transformations of the respective cities. The next chapter focuses on Yangon: Preceded by the fellows' report from 2018 (Lall et al., 2018), which provides a detailed documentation of WfW's methodology and implemented housing projects, this contribution seeks to expand on two fronts that have been identified as critical for the growing scope and impact of the organisation. The first one relates to the incremental employment of strategies by WfW to build alliances with a wide range of actors in moments of opportunity. The second one outlines how, in the challenging context of Yangon, WfW has been navigating the landscape of land and tenure security in the implementation of community-led housing, and what trajectories they pursue, capitalising on the previously mentioned alliances. Along similar lines, the following chapter illustrates Arkom's way of working in disadvantaged settlements in Yogyakarta. It reflects on Arkom's collaborative approach and allows for an unpacking of the complex realities of tenure security in Yogyakarta. The chapter furthermore explores strategies employed by Arkom to initiate change by building on existing government-led programmes for housing, and by exploring new avenues which are more sensitive to the realities of the urban poor. The last section is put together as a synopsis of the fellows' reflections on their practices, across cities and organisations, with an emphasis on principles that guide people-centred development.

Fig 4. Locating Yangon, in Myanmar and Yogyakarta, in Indonesia.



Unpacking people-centred approaches to housing

by Katrin Hofer

The reflections in this booklet underlie the focus of people-centred approaches to housing in the context of Yangon and Yogyakarta. Therefore, the following section introduces the main concepts of *people-centred development* and *housing* and elaborates the urban poor's notion of living in urban spaces.

Conceptualising people-centred development

The main goal of people-centred approaches is to involve people directly in the planning, development, implementation and monitoring of projects. Communities are recognised as relevant stakeholders and beyond being informed about projects, they are encouraged to take an active role in changes that affect them directly and indirectly. Such approaches thus recognise the existing capabilities of communities and encourage their active participation. They aim at giving local communities the opportunity to improve their self-reliance, to stand up for their rights and fight against social injustice, as well as to make themselves heard by participating in decision-making processes.

By virtue of this, people-centred development puts communities at the centre. The term *community* is general and subsumes a variety of collectives; some of them share a long joint history and future, whereas others find themselves linked due to a very particular cause at a specific point in time (Cabannes, 2018). The formation of such networks is, however, universal and regardless of their cause and the duration of their existence, they shape urban realities (*ibid.*). Approaches to people-centred development are an attempt to move away from mainstream top-down approaches and by doing so, further empowering communities to play an active role. Involving communities directly bears the potential of exploring and creating room(s) for alternative solutions to their challenges and experienced injustices.

Fig 5. (facing page) Children in peripheral Yangon, buying ice cream.

People-centred development thus fosters collective agency for collective action and change.

Cities across the globe have been experiencing the emergence of collective action of communities. Roitman (2019a, p. 281) links this emergence of collective demands from grassroots networks to social, economic, political, and spiritual crises that “have encouraged stronger solidarity and collective work”. However, there is often a contradiction between the sustainability of demands and networks and the spontaneity of their actions (Cabannes, 2018). This raises key questions for people-centred development: how can the momentum for a sense of collective agency and collective action be built and maintained in spite of the potential timebound issue at hand? And how can networks function in unity despite the complexities of the many social identities and interests within the networks? Another key issue of people-centred development is linked to the challenge of how to bridge scales of collective action. As challenges impacting the urban poor are often not only experienced locally, but occur at the city, nation or global scale, sustainable solutions can seldomly solely build on communities’ work but require the involvement of other stakeholders from the public and private sector.

This booklet highlights the experiences of local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the context of Yangon and Yogyakarta that deal with these questions on a daily basis. They work in contexts, where mainstream approaches often overlook communities as experts of their lives and their environment. Grounding people’s experiences is thus a key approach for both WfW and Arkom. Their work is guided by a people-centred approach and they both aim for recognition of community-based practices and for negotiations across scales. Through this, they aim at setting precedents and at community mobilisation for reshaping mainstream development discourses. Belonging to the regional ACHR network furthermore helps them to share learning insights across organisations.

Conceptualising housing

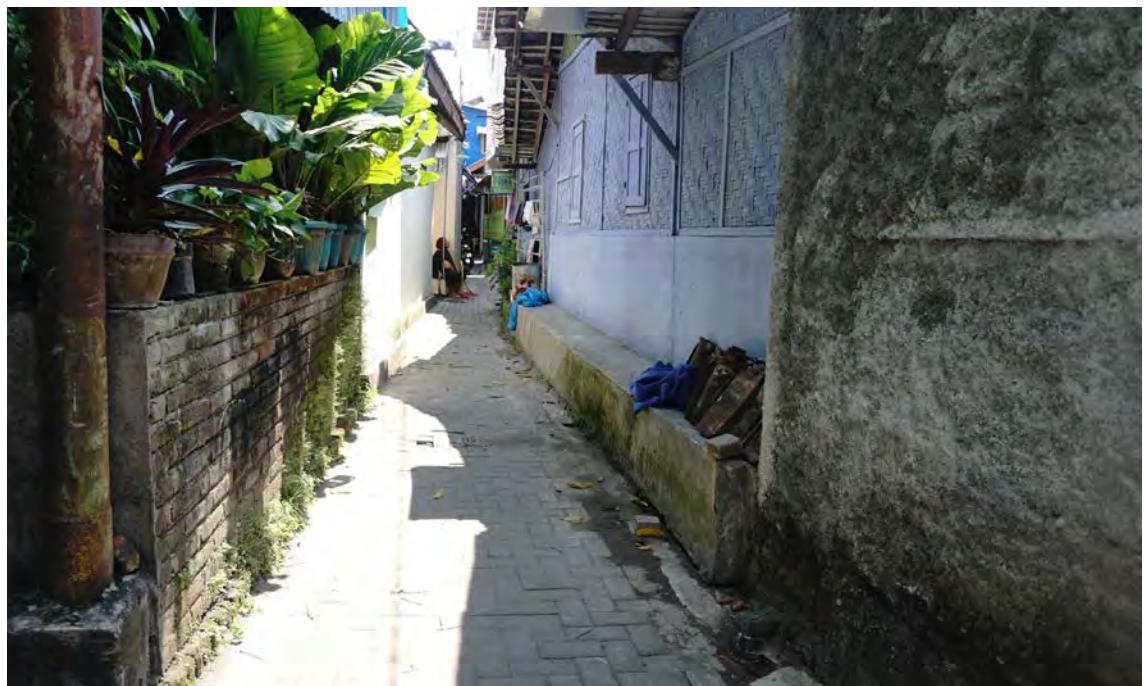
Article 25 of the Human Rights states that every person has the right to an adequate standard of living, which includes housing (United Nations, 1948). UN-Habitat (2012) defines it as a basic social condition, which affects people’s quality of life. Housing is thus linked to both the idea of houses as a physical structure providing shelter and protection, as well as the notion of housing as being a home. It is thus more than a close-ended product and a roof and four walls but also has a social meaning and can be recognised as source of security (Saegert, 1985). Following Rolnik (2014, p. 294), the right

to housing should be thought holistically. She describes it as follows:

"The right to housing has to be apprehended in a much broader context in order to encompass the security of all forms of tenure and the protection against forced evictions; access to basic services, including health care, education, potable water, food, electricity, sanitation, waste disposal, transport, leisure, green spaces and a healthy environment; the right to use appropriate and adequate materials ensuring habitability, including adequate space and effective protection against natural threats to health and life; affordability of, and access to means of subsistence, including access to land, infrastructure, natural and environmental resources, and sources of livelihood and work; the right of participation in all stages and processes of decision-making related to housing; and the prioritisation of the needs of vulnerable and historically marginalised minorities".

Fig 6. Narrow pathways in densely populated settlements in Yogyakarta's inner city.

Housing is thus “a gateway to other rights, it is a condition that has to be fulfilled in order to ensure the exercise of belonging in all its aspects” (*ibid.*, p. 295). This makes it a central element of sustainable development and thus a key issue for national and local authorities.



Housing is provided by different actors: the state, the private sector and communities. Each actor applies different means to address the housing need and demand. In the Asia-Pacific region, providing housing for everyone is one of the critical challenges. The region has experienced a rapid increase of urbanisation rates. Estimates for future development show that cities in this region will keep on growing –according to UN-Habitat (2015), an additional one billion people will be living in the region's cities by 2040. Land becomes increasingly scarce in these urban areas and the deriving competition leads to a growing perception of land as a commodity rather than a common good. This especially creates access barriers for urban poor. Not being able to obtain land through formal channels, they have to seek alternative means to access shelter. In 2010, roughly 88 million people or 31% of urban dwellers in SEA, lived in slums (UN-Habitat, 2010). The State of Asian and Pacific Cities 2015 report (UN-Habitat, 2015) further predicts growing inequalities. Economic growth in the region has led to a rise in the size of the middle classes –however, the urban poor have not benefited from the economic developments. They remain at the margins and cities fail to provide adequate responses to urban poverty –including responses to affordable and adequate housing. This leads to widening disparities, which “may undermine social cohesion and consensus” (*ibid.*, p. 14).

Both Arkom and WfW recognise housing as a key issue in their respective city and have designed projects to address the housing needs of the urban poor. As the state and private sector do not build enough houses –this is especially true for low income households– there are high percentages of self-built neighbourhoods in both Yangon and Yogyakarta. The case studies show how the two organisations recognise housing as a door-opener for other aspects of an adequate living standard and explain how they explore and design alternative solutions to provide shelter and security to vulnerable groups in the city.

Living in urban spaces

Growing housing needs coupled with the commodification of land in Asian-Pacific cities impacts urban poor directly and puts them at risk of being evicted from their current living spaces. As they commonly cannot access land and shelter through formal means, they have found (and are still finding) alternative ways to occupy land and housing outside the competitive housing markets; they access land informally, sometimes illegally, and occupy and build houses that are not in compliance with official planning and building regulations. This stipulates the growth of informal settlements. Whereas this is not a new phenomenon, increased land value accompanied by neoliberal

policies today increasingly threaten their ability to inhabit urban spaces (Cabannes, 2018). They are thus “likely to continually face the possibility of being eliminated through a variety of well-known processes, including gentrification, government land confiscation for urban revival or renovation, the commercialisation of residential areas, and the invocation of land-use regulations” (*ibid.*, p. 32). The disadvantaged socio-economic position of affected communities makes their situation even more challenging, as “many lack insight into the value of the land, have poor negotiations skills, and are in difficult situations financially” (Reerink, 2011, p. 2). They experience multiple pressures, which threaten their ability to inhabit urban spaces.

Conceptually, this ability to occupy and take up spaces in cities is here linked to Lefebvre’s concept of the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1996). The right to the city is not understood as a right in legal terms, but as a normative celebration of all urban inhabitants as contributors to the city –regardless of their legal status (*ibid.*). It therefore ascribes all urban dwellers the *right* to inhabit and shape urban spaces. Lefebvre’s right to the city is based on two principal privileges: (1) the right to participate, and (2) the right to appropriate; the latter not only referring to the right to access existing urban spaces but also to produce new spaces and shape the urban environment (Purcell, 2002). Meanwhile, there are different readings of the right to the city and there is no agreement on how it is constituted. Whereas some treat it as “a political horizon for emancipation”, others see it as “a –moral, individual, collective, social or human– right that should be integrated into public policies and be implemented by governments” (Attoh, cited in Rolnik, 2014, p. 294). According to Roitman (2019b), it involves the ability to participate, vote and be involved in decision making as well as access to services and basic infrastructure in a city. Meanwhile, the right to the city can also be seen as a claim for new urban politics (Purcell, 2002) or as “a collective demand that requires collective action” (Roitman, 2019b, p. 152).

Land and housing play a central role in the concept of the right to the city. Or as Rolnik (2014, p. 294) puts it: “displacements, evictions, threats on security of tenure of urban dwellers, the right to be an integral part of the decision-making process of defining the destiny of urban spaces and mostly the political links between ‘place’, ‘condition of inhabitance’ and citizenship rights are in the core of all ‘right to city’ urban struggles”. The ability of urban poor to access formal land and housing in urban areas is thus a fundamental element of claims for the right to the city. Therefore, unpacking people’s ability to inhabit the city requires taking a look at land rights and land tenure systems.

Land rights generally refer to the privilege of accessing, withdrawing, managing, excluding, alienating and transferring land and people's right to due process and compensation when land is expropriated (Schlager and Ostrom, RRI, cited in Robinson et al., 2017, p. 2). They determine who can use a plot of land as a resource, define the purpose and period of time, and lay out the conditions under which this can be done (Robinson et al., 2017). Being able to inhabit urban spaces also means having tenure security and thus being protected against involuntary removal without due process and compensation (Reerink, 2011). Secured land tenure is not only important as a legitimacy to inhabit a certain space but may also encourage urban dwellers to invest in improved homes and livelihoods. It is thus a catalyst for reducing poverty and social inclusion (Kirk et al., 2014). However, tenure security itself is a complex concept and requires dismantling. Whereas tenure security is often linked to the duality of holding legal land titles on the one hand, or occupying land illegally on the other hand, reality is more complex; experiences of tenure security can rather be conceptualised as a continuum from precarity to security that is influenced by multiple factors (Payne & Durand-Lasserve, 2012). Legitimacy of land occupation is therefore ambiguous (Raharjo, 2010). As much as the common assumption that legal land titles automatically give landholders ultimate security of tenure, the argument cannot be upheld that no legal land titles means being at the immediate threat of eviction (Robinson et al., 2017). De jure rights may differ from de facto rights. Furthermore, landholders' experience of security of tenure is informed by their perceived legitimacy of tenure (Reerink, 2011). Ultimately, tenure security is also influenced by risks beyond the perception of residents, including urban planning, structural economic drivers and local power structures (Daryono, 2010). Figure 8 shows that tenure security thus has multiple domains that shape the experience of residents.

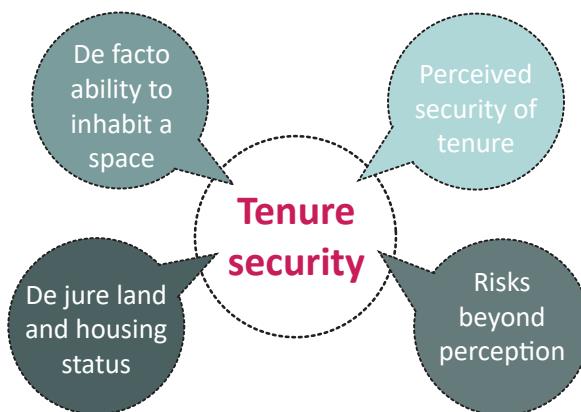


Fig 7. Domains of tenure security.

In post-colonial countries like Myanmar and Indonesia, land systems are often constituted of an overlap of customary and western statutory land systems, with an increasing emphasis on commodified land systems with the right of the individual (Payne & Durand-Lasserve, 2012). Land rights are “a product of historical and cultural factors” and the land tenure system thus reflects “the relationships between people, society and land” (Payne, cited in Kirk et al., 2015, p. vii). As Payne & Durand-Lasserve (2012, p. 2) point out, “any discussion of land tenure and property rights needs to recognise the importance of cultural, historical and political influences, as well as those of technical and legal systems”. Violations of people’s right to housing are to be seen as a part of larger exclusionary mechanisms, “which block part of the city inhabitants to be an integral part of the city’s social, cultural and political fabric” (Rolnik, 2014, p. 298). These are the spaces in which WfW and Arkom operate.

Setting the scene

Yangon and Yogyakarta are highly dynamic cities which transform rapidly. Within this context WfW and Arkom provide support for people-centred approaches to housing for urban poor. They explore alternative spaces and work towards more security for people inhabiting and using urban spaces.

In order to elaborate and reflect on the work of WfW and Arkom, we therefore build on the theoretical concepts explained above. We see housing, inhabiting urban spaces and community-based claims for the right to the city as being interlinked. Following Vilarrodona (2016, p. 7) we acknowledge that “without the right to housing, there is no right to inhabit. And being deprived of the right to inhabit means having no rights to participate actively and freely in the urban experience, in the social construction, and having to do it from the underground, persecuted or even repressed”. In order to structure the two case studies, we look at two different ways of how these organisations operate: by bridging scales and exploring alternative trajectories.

 KB Kookmin Bank
 KB Labor Union
 Women for the world

Women Community Center

Taw Win Housing Shwepaukkan



Organisational Overview

Women for the World

Women for the World or *Pyo Mae Eain* (translating into *woman's home*), is a national civil-society organisation operating in Myanmar since 2004. With the vision to create “a balanced society built on the rights of each person to self-determination and to live in dignity without scarcity” (Lall et al., 2018, p. 30), WfW has been actively engaged in bridging systemic gaps in land ownership and affordable housing for urban poor communities. By putting communities at the centre of the development process, WfW works across a range of areas, including urban upgrading, low-cost housing, community infrastructure, livelihood and food security, disaster-risk reduction, and financial inclusion.

In the early years of their operation, WfW was focused on social development, mainly through the lens of female empowerment and leadership. However, the occurrence of Cyclone Nargis in 2008, which caused widespread human and material losses in Myanmar, brought about a shift in the conceptualisation of their mandate. In the aftermath of the disaster, relief was initially slowed down due to the military’s resistance to allow foreign aid into the country, and it was up to local organisations to respond to the national crisis. Within this context, WfW turned to post-disaster reconstruction and recovery mechanisms. Against the backdrop of a nationally assumed top-down response to the recovery, WfW founder and director Van Lizar Aung saw the need for more collaborative and people-centred approaches to rehabilitation, that would utilise the capacities of the affected populations and be reflective of their needs. With a new way to relate to urban poor communities, WfW soon changed their approach from a professional-driven to a people-driven one.

*Fig 8. (Facing page)
Residents of the Taw Win housing project in Shwepaukkan, in front of their community centre.*

From there, the next step was the adoption of the internationally widely applied scheme of collectivising women’s saving groups (WSG) as a gateway to implement different community-based activities and projects. Therein, secure and affordable housing emerged as a high priority for communities,



Fig 9. Meeting with the community of Ward 20 in Hlaingtharyar township.

and in response, WfW initiated in 2009 a series of pilot projects based on the idea of collective saving, collective purchase of land, and self-construction. This first generation of community-led housing projects emerged in some of the poorest townships of Yangon region (Hlaingtharyar, North Okkalapa and Kungyangon) with small funds made available from ACHR's Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA) Program.

These early projects laid the foundation for the establishment of the Women's Saving and Development Network (WSDN); a system of WSGs supported by WfW with the aim of expanding the scope of their activities, offering mutual support and exchanging knowledge within and beyond their network. With the continuous support of CAN, as well as Community Bithukar Platform (CBP), a locally based network of young community architects, WfW has facilitated the implementation of 11 housing projects throughout Yangon since. Next to supporting WSGs to access land and housing, the organisation has been mobilising further communities across Yangon to join the saving schemes, has been engaging in community-led surveys to document the realities of urban poor dwellers and open the door to the implementation of community-based interventions, and has been supporting people in improving financial literacy and acquiring technical and other skills.

For a small organisation comprised of just seven people, WfW has a large network of partners, affiliates, friends and volunteers that are supporting their mission in different capacities. These partners range from governmental institutions at city and regional level, to international aid organisations, transnational networks, architects and planners, academic institutions, microfinance companies and, importantly, a growing number of WSGs and urban poor communities. Capitalising on their experience and grounded knowledge, and on these strategic partnerships that bring in different sources of expertise, WfW has been increasingly advocating to public authorities for more inclusive and people-centred approaches to housing and urban development. Today, WfW is active in the regions of Yangon, Mandalay, Ayeyarwady and the states of Kayin, Shan and Rakhine.

Fundamentally, WfW grounds their practice in the belief that communities should be at the core of their own development process, and with their work they aim to amplify the voice of marginalised people, as well as encourage integrated and collaborative processes and promote the exchange of knowledge across scales and sectors.

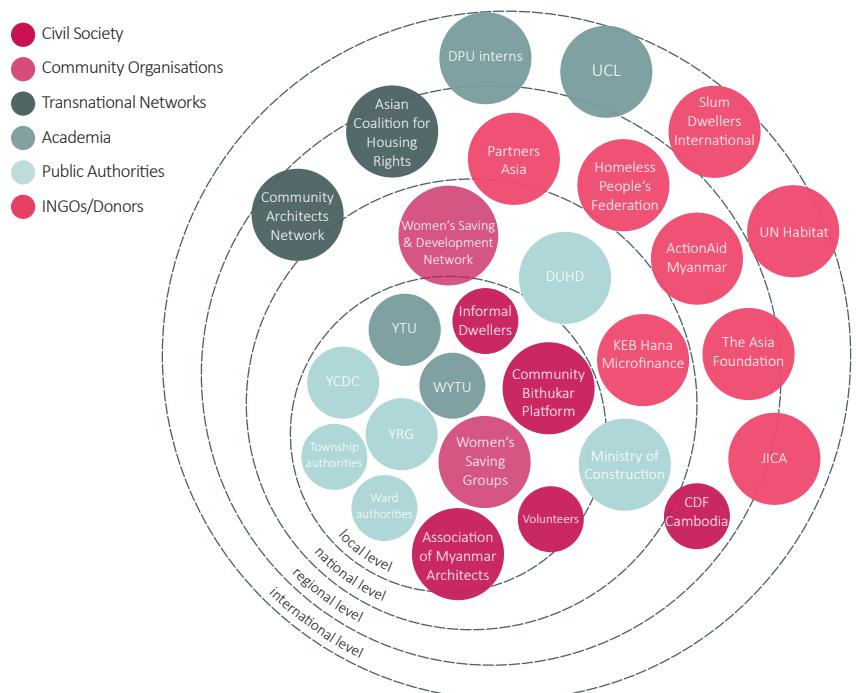


Fig 10. The network of partners of Women for the World.



Arkomjogja

Arkomjogja (*Arsitek Komunitas Yogyakarta*, or Community Architects, short Arkom) was formally established as a local NGO in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2013. Their mission is to organise communities, using architecture and local knowledge, to enable responsive, people-driven development. Today, Arkom has a presence across 19 cities in Indonesia; working with communities to support heritage revival and the creative economy in rural areas, promote environmentally-sustainable and resilient construction methods, support disaster relief and reconstruction efforts, and establish more inclusive, safe and secure cities through a focus on land and housing for the urban poor.

The seeds of Arkom's development were planted almost a decade before its establishment, when several of the organisation's founders were working on post-tsunami relief and reconstruction in Aceh. For a little over two years, the group explored the foundations of effective, people-led projects, learning from a team of community architects from the Hunnarshala Foundation. Here, the group developed a deeper understanding of the value of organising communities, and the importance of adopting a more holistic approach to architecture than is traditionally taught in formal institutions.

Several years later, Yuli Kusworo, co-founder and General Coordinator of Arkom, turned his attention back to Yogyakarta. Reconnecting with old colleagues, he began mobilising communities living along the city's riverbanks, and, with funds provided through ACHR's ACCA programme, led a first process of settlement mapping and planning with a group of Gajah Wong residents.

Eventually, Arkom was established as an NGO. Working directly with residents, the team (now made up of many of those from Aceh) mapped 33 settlements along the Winongo and Gajah Wong rivers, and successfully completed a number of upgrading projects. Armed with an ever-greater understanding of the process of community organising, and the importance of community savings systems, they had facilitated the emergence of Kalijawi in 2012 - a network of savings groups run by women living along the two rivers. Together Arkom and Kalijawi established a Community Development Fund (Dana Pengembangan Komunitas, DPK), and continued their work of renovating houses, upgrading settlements, and engaging in advocacy work and relationship-building with local government.

*Fig 11. (facing page)
Mapping and planning with
the communities. - Arkom*



Fig 12. Members of Kalijawi.

Currently, Arkom seeks to effect change at a number of levels. Principally, they promote an approach that places people at the centre of development; engaging them as active subjects or agents of change, rather than as passive objects or simply, beneficiaries. Aligned with both ACHR and CAN's philosophy, they hold an unwavering belief that people can and should be *the solution* and actively seek a holistic, embedded and sustainable approach that builds on existing knowledge, and the strong Indonesian tradition of *gotong royong* or mutual assistance.

With this in mind, Arkom utilises architecture at the community-level as a tool to unearth and build people's latent capacities, and encourage and revive collaboration. Individuals are brought together through collective processes of settlement mapping, planning and implementation aimed at producing both immediate tangible results in the form of improvements to the built environment, as well as longer-term outcomes in the form of empowered, active and mobilised communities.

At a broader level, Arkom works to shift conventional understandings of architecture away from being an individual and profit-driven endeavour, towards one that is truly people-centred and oriented towards creative

problem-solving. Through a mixture of advocacy and education, they aim to promote community architecture as a profession- changing the ways in which architects work with marginalised communities; and creating a body of knowledge that can be shared and used across Indonesia (and beyond) to strengthen the relevant capacities of architects. With a network of community architects around Indonesia already in place, they have today established the Arkom Indonesia Foundation to ensure the organisation's long-term sustainability and effectiveness.

Finally, recognising that spatial development always has social implications, Arkom seeks to build partnerships across sectors- working with actors from civil society, government, business, and academia to effect change at all levels. Ultimately, their work rests on a foundation of collaborative action, and a belief that achieving real impact, in a deeper and more sustained sense, can only occur through meaningful partnerships and setting an example for what is truly possible.

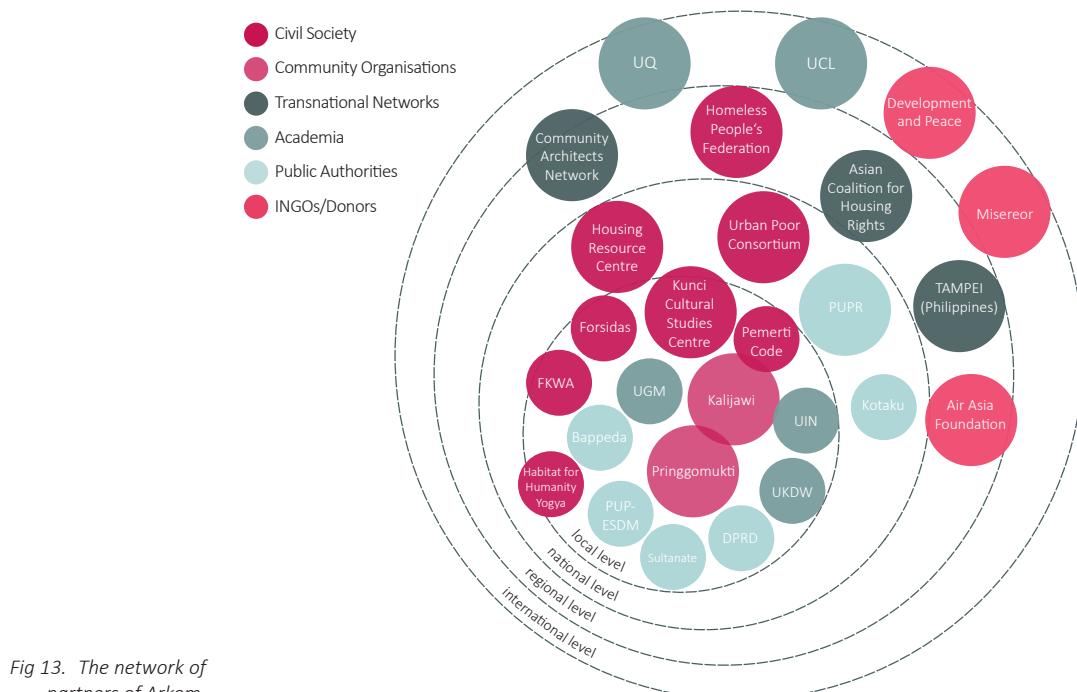
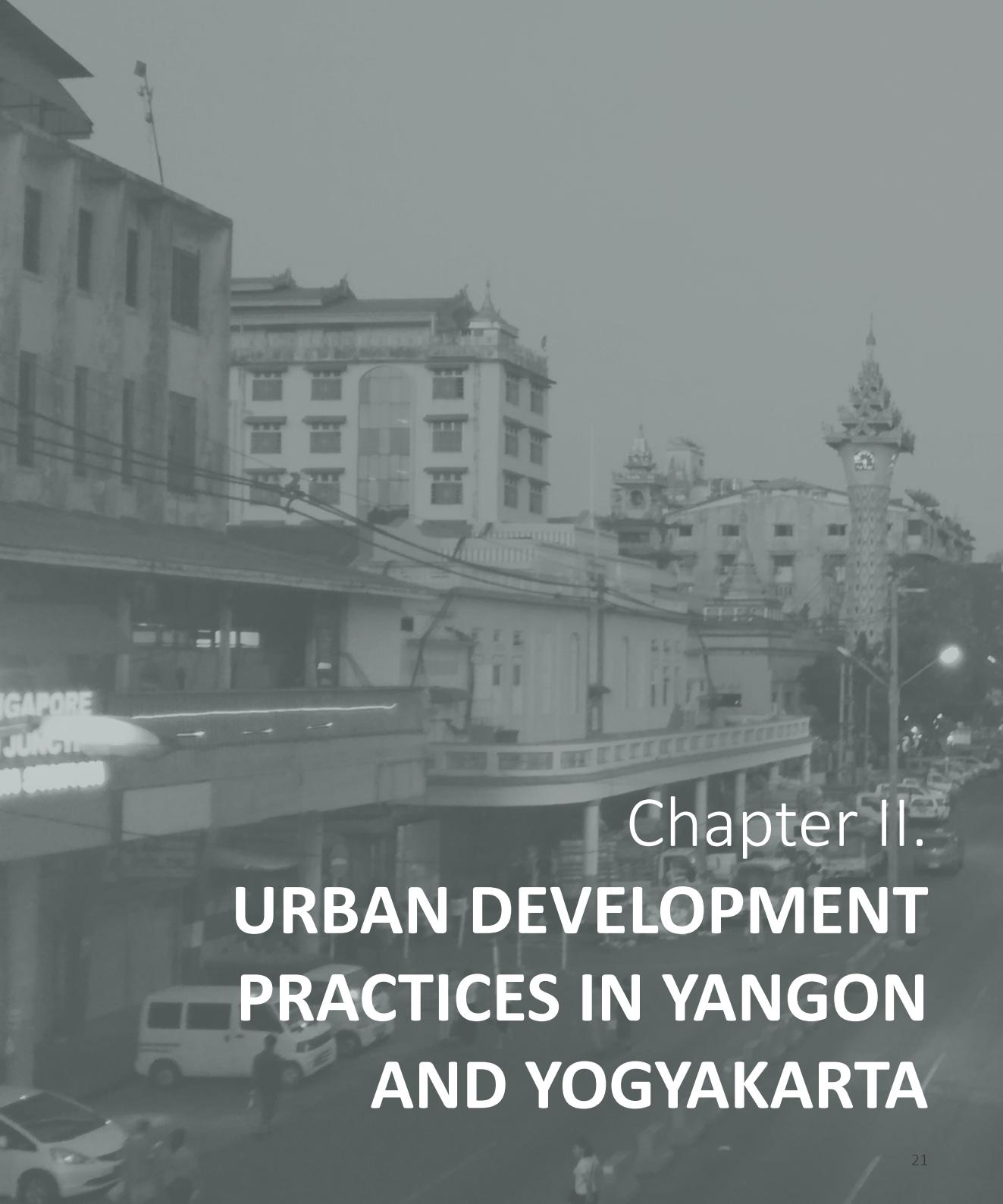


Fig 13. The network of partners of Arkom.



Fig 14. Arkom team member
on scooter.



Chapter II.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES IN YANGON AND YOGYAKARTA



The case of Yangon

by Marina Kolovou Kouri

Socio-political transformations and urban development¹

Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, is a country in Asia –the largest of the mainland SEA states– and borders India, Bangladesh, China, Laos and Thailand. While Myanmar is still predominantly rural, its pace of urbanisation is picking up rapidly, and the urban population is expected to grow from just under 30% in 2019 to 35% by 2050 (World Bank, 2019). The driving force of this urbanisation is internal migration –primarily in search of better employment opportunities, but also due to civil conflicts, landlessness, rural poverty and natural disasters (*ibid.*). Yangon, the former capital, is located in Lower Myanmar and is the largest city with a population of over seven million according to the most recent census (Dept. Of Population, 2015). It is the country's most diverse hub, composed of a Burmese majority, and Indian, Chinese Burmese, Karen and Rakhine ethnic groups (UNDP, 2015). Notably, Yangon has been the epicentre of the country's urbanisation and is expected to reach a population of 10,8 million by 2040 (JICA, 2018a) –something that evidently places immense pressure on the city and regional authorities to keep up with the increasing demands for housing and infrastructure.

Social and political transition in Yangon

In order to situate current trajectories of urban development in Yangon –and understand against what setting WfW has been operating– it is important to

*Fig 15. (facing page)
View from Maha Bandula
road, in downtown Yangon.*

¹ The output produced by the previous wave of fellows (Lall et al., 2018) covered already many aspects of the history and development of Yangon; building on that –and unavoidably repeating some contextual information– this volume goes into more depth regarding the role of land for housing and urban development in the city and its implications on tenure security.

review the political and social circumstances that have shaped the landscape of housing, land and property in Yangon over the course of the last century. Indeed, the turbulent history of Myanmar is in multiple ways imprinted in the development of its metropolis. Being the capital of the British colony of Burma since 1852, Yangon (then Rangoon) was mostly confined in what is today the Central Business District (CBD). The city was at the forefront of the independence movement that started growing in the 1920s and 1930s and led to the end of the British rule in 1948. Soon after independence, Yangon reached a population of over one million, entering the 1950s as one of the most cosmopolitan cities in Asia (UNDP, 2015).

After a short period of democratic rule, a coup d'état staged by the military in 1962 marked the launch of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) (Leckie & Simperingham, 2009). BSPP introduced an isolationist rule during which Yangon's infrastructure deteriorated from poor maintenance and the inability to keep up with the growing population. The socialist military regime adopted a new Constitution in 1974, recognising BSPP as the only legal political party in the country and formalising the non-separation of powers (*ibid.*). In 1988, nationwide protests against the increasing militarisation, corruption and economic crisis –known as the 8888 Uprising– were followed by another coup d'état and the establishment of a martial law regime under the name State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). In an attempt to eliminate British influence, SLORC changed the country's name from Burma to Myanmar, and renamed the capital *Yangon* in 1989. Elections were held in 1990, however SLORC did not recognise the victory of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and put the party's leader Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest.

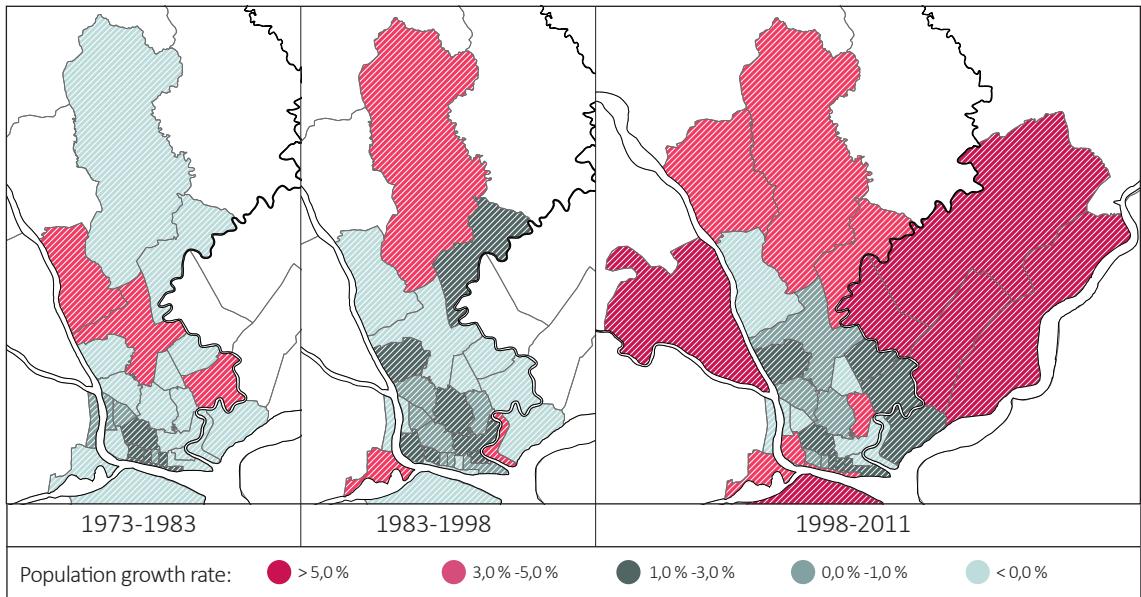
The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), which assumed power in 2007 as a reconfiguration of SLORC, essentially did not diverge from the mandate of its predecessor, other than consolidating the concentration of power around the state (*ibid.*). The violent suppression of civilian protests in the same year –known as the Saffron Revolution– was met with sanctions on the government by the European Union and the United States, leading to further deterioration of the country's economy. In the meantime, the capital was moved to newly-built Naypyidaw, however Yangon maintained its role as the commercial and cultural centre of Myanmar, experiencing an increasing urbanisation mainly around areas of industrial activity. In 2008, parts of the country were hit by cyclone Nargis with the tragic aftermath of 140,000 deaths, severe damages to infrastructure, and large-scale displacement and migration from Ayeyarwaddy Region to Yangon Region. The disaster was in some ways key in exposing shortcomings of the military government and



Fig 16. View of a side street in downtown Yangon.

ultimately in paving the way for the country's transition to a democratic government.

The first quasi-democratic elections after decades were held in 2010, leading to the dissolution of SPDC and the inauguration of the newly elected government, led by President Thein Sein. This occurred in parallel to the economic opening of the country to Western markets and an overall liberalisation of investments, in an effort to revive the national economy (McCarthy, 2016). Since 2011, Myanmar –and Yangon in particular– has witnessed rising levels of foreign investment, attracted by the comparatively cheap labour and vast natural resources (Forbes, 2016). In the general elections of 2015, NLD won with a supermajority in both the House of Representatives and the House of Nationalities, and Suu Kyi became the State Counsellor of Myanmar. The previous work record of NLD, and particularly its leader, raised expectations for the country's political and economic transformation from both the national and international community (Jones, 2014). While discourses of *democratisation* are dominating more recent political analyses of Myanmar, it is important to not be oblivious to the legacy of successive authoritarian regimes; including the concentration of power around *crony capitalists* with ties to the state, as well as a parliament



where 25% of the seats are appointed to military personnel –both of which have a significant influence on the ongoing structural reforms (*ibid.*).

Urban development: Historical patterns and recent trends

The political and social circumstances that Myanmar has undergone are mirrored also in the urban development of Yangon. Since independence, the city has been expanding through what Rhoads calls practices of “force and territorialisation” (2018, p. 280) –a cycle of evictions, relocation to peripheral areas, and the incorporation of such areas into the municipality. More specifically, Yangon’s boundaries were extended in two waves, in the late 1950s and late 1980s, with the objective of relocating informal settlers from inner-city to peripheral areas, as well as establishing new industrial zones. The first *squatter clearance* started in 1958 and involved the relocation of 300,000 informal settlers to the townships North Okkalapa, South Okkalapa and Thaketa, which nowadays form part of the inner-city (Kyed, 2019; Forbes, 2016). In 1989, during the military government, an arguably more politically motivated² clearance began, in the course of which

Fig 17. The maps showing the transition of the population growth rate by township highlight the peripheral areas of Yangon as the most dynamically evolving.

2 The squatter clearance of the late 1980s occurred right after the political uprising of 1988, and it has been argued that the forced removal of people from areas around monasteries and other public sites was, in part, to break organised networks of protest that could challenge the regime (Kyed, 2019).



Fig 18. Different morphologies of Yangon (top to bottom): the downtown area, the mid-city, the peri-urban industrial zones, and the sprawling informal settlements.

450,000-500,000 people were moved to the newly-established townships Hlaingtharyar, Shwepyithar, East Dagon, South Dagon, North Dagon and Dagon Seikkan (*ibid.*). The evicted would not always be granted land plots in the new areas –many inevitably occupied lands without proper titling– and the provision of services and basic infrastructure was virtually non-existent (Kyed, 2019).

Since the country's transition to democracy and its economic liberalisation, approaches to urban development and housing have been caught between promoting inclusive growth and poverty reduction, and encouraging foreign investment. On the one hand, accelerated development of infrastructure is taking place in many parts of the country, the construction sector is experiencing a boom, and the inflow of foreign investments has stimulated trade and commercial opportunities, resulting in an overall improvement of living standards and a decline of poverty, in particular in urban centres (World Bank, 2017). However, most of these developments have focused on the generation of profit, including the construction of hotel resorts, high-end condominiums and shopping complexes. In parallel to that, Yangon has been witnessing an increase in the number of informal settlements in peri-urban areas as a result of migration after Cyclone Nargis, the industrialisation of the periphery and the increasing demand for labour, the decline of agricultural productivity, the dramatic increase of land prices in and around the city, and the under-supply of affordable housing (UN-Habitat, 2017a). While this urbanisation and growth carry great potential for a spatially, economically and socially inclusive city, there is a lack of integrated plans that accommodate the urban growth –and even where plans are in place, their implementation is not guaranteed (World Bank, 2019).

Table 1. Push and pull factors for rural and inner-city emigrations to the periphery		
	Rural to urban periphery	Inner-city to urban periphery
Push Factors	Drought and natural disasters	Eviction, slum clearance
	Land loss / landlessness	Rising rents
	Seasonal unemployment	Resettlement of civil servants
		Sell house for needed money
Pull Factors	Regular, year-round employment	
	Perceived demand for factory labour	Perceived demand for factory labour
	Village-based migration networks & improved communication (mobile phones)	Cheaper land
	Improved healthcare	Cheaper rent
	Improved education	



Fig 19. The vision for Greater Yangon fails to capture the realities and the challenges of the city's people.

Since 2013, and under the direction of the Yangon Regional Government (YRG), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has been working alongside Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) on a master plan for Greater Yangon, envisioning development in the north/northeast and south/southwest, and the establishment of new sub-centres by 2040 (JICA, 2013; 2018b). The plan prioritises industrial and transit-oriented development, however issues like the fate of informal settlements, the implications of land speculation, and questions of social, economic and spatial inclusion remain largely unaddressed. In parallel to this plan, efforts are being made to develop policies, frameworks and tools that respond to the emerging challenges, albeit at a relatively slow pace. These include the drafting of a National Urban Policy and a National Housing Policy with the assistance of UN-Habitat, as well as the introduction of a new Land Law, Land Zoning Plan and Land Ownership Cadastre –finding themselves at different stages of the drafting process. In view of the rapid urbanisation of Yangon, it remains to be seen whether these developments will catch up with the growth of the city and be inclusive of its urban poor populations.



Contextualising people-centred approaches to housing

Channels of housing supply in Yangon

Against the backdrop of a long-standing neglect of urban and housing policies, the provision of public housing in Myanmar has been limited. For Yangon Region the main channel of housing supply through the state has been through the Department of Urban and Housing Development (DUHD), at the Ministry of Construction (MoC). However, its focus laid more on housing for civil servants and less so on low-cost and affordable housing (ADB, 2019). Since the department's emergence in 1951 until 2016, DUHD had constructed around 140,000 housing units, only 25% of which were low-cost units (JICA, 2018b). With selling prices ranging from around 10,000 USD up to 40,000 USD per unit (Myo Pa Pa San, 2018), most dwellings provided through formal delivery channels are unaffordable for the vast majority of Yangon's residents –and thus remain under-occupied. In addition to the construction of apartment blocks, DUHD allocated some 250,000 plots to

Fig 20. (facing page) Model of the housing unit in Pan Thazin community housing project.

Fig 21. Publicly provided low-cost and affordable housing in Dagon Seikkan township. - Ricardo Marten Caceres



Table 2. Low-cost & affordable housing under DUHD program (period 2016-2018)

Low-cost housing project	Township	Total units
Yuzana Low Cost (phase I)	Dagon Seikkan	864
Yuzana Low Cost (phase II)	Dagon Seikkan	1,152
Kanaung Housing	Dagon Seikkan	852
Yoma Low Cost	Dagon Seikkan	1,920
Yuzana Low Cost (phase III)	Dagon Seikkan	1,456
Thilawa	Than Lyin	1,480
Aung Myin Mo Low Cost (phase I)	South Dagon	960
Kyan Sit Min Low Cost (phase I)	Hlaingtharyar	1,904
Shwe Lin Pan (phase II)	Hlaingtharyar	496
Shwe Lin Pan (phase II)	Hlaingtharyar	504
Total		11,588
Affordable housing project	Township	Total units
Thilawa	Than Lyin	240
Aung Myin Mo	South Dagon	96
Shwe Lin Pan IZ Commercial Area	Hlaingtharyar	64
Shwe Pyi Thar IZ Commercial Area	Shwe Pyi Thar	112
Kyan Sit Min (phase I)	Hlaingtharyar	588
Kyan Sit Min (phase II)	Hlaingtharyar	664
Waterfront Villa (phase II)	Thaketa	18
Inwa Housing	South Dagon	32
Yadanar Hninsi Residence	Dagon Seikkan	1,780
Total		3,594

low-income households for self-construction, however these scheme has been under-utilised according to the Asian Development Bank (2019).

As Yangon Region is industrialising and expanding, there is an overall consensus that one of the biggest challenges on the city will be to cope with the demands for housing, and in particular affordable housing (ADB, 2019; World Bank, 2019, UN-Habitat, 2017b). The projected population growth creates a demand for 1,3 million housing units by 2030 (ADB, 2019, p. 7) placing immense pressure on the city and regional authorities. In response, DUHD announced the implementation of its *Million Homes Plan* by 2030 –20% of which will be supplied by DUHD, while the rest is assumed to be provided by the private sector and local governments (ADB, 2019). Low-



Fig 22. View of a settlement in South Dagon. - Aung Zaw Moe

cost housing units (for low-income households) will make up 90% of DUHD's share, and the rest 10% will be affordable housing (for lower middle-income households) (*ibid.*). However, the capacity of the private sector to construct the remaining 800,000 housing units is rather questionable, and even more so is their intention to focus on affordable solutions, considering that commercial and office buildings, serviced apartments and hotels comprise mostly their areas of activity (*ibid.*). Combined, the state and private sector produce no more than 20,000 housing units per year –considerably less than the 100,000 units that are needed to keep up with the demand (*ibid.*).

The state mechanisms for the provision of housing to low-income populations have been inadequate –in terms of genuine affordability, the suitability of housing typologies, and their numerical sufficiency. This has led most of the city's economically poor dwellers towards informal channels to cover their needs for shelter (ADB, 2019; World Bank, 2019). This informality is present in most (if not all) steps toward the production of truly affordable housing units; from the transactions of land, to the conversion of farmland into residential land, the selling and buying of housing units, and rental agreements (UN-Habitat, 2017b). Excluded from formal systems –like the possession of legal documentation, access to urban services, or access to

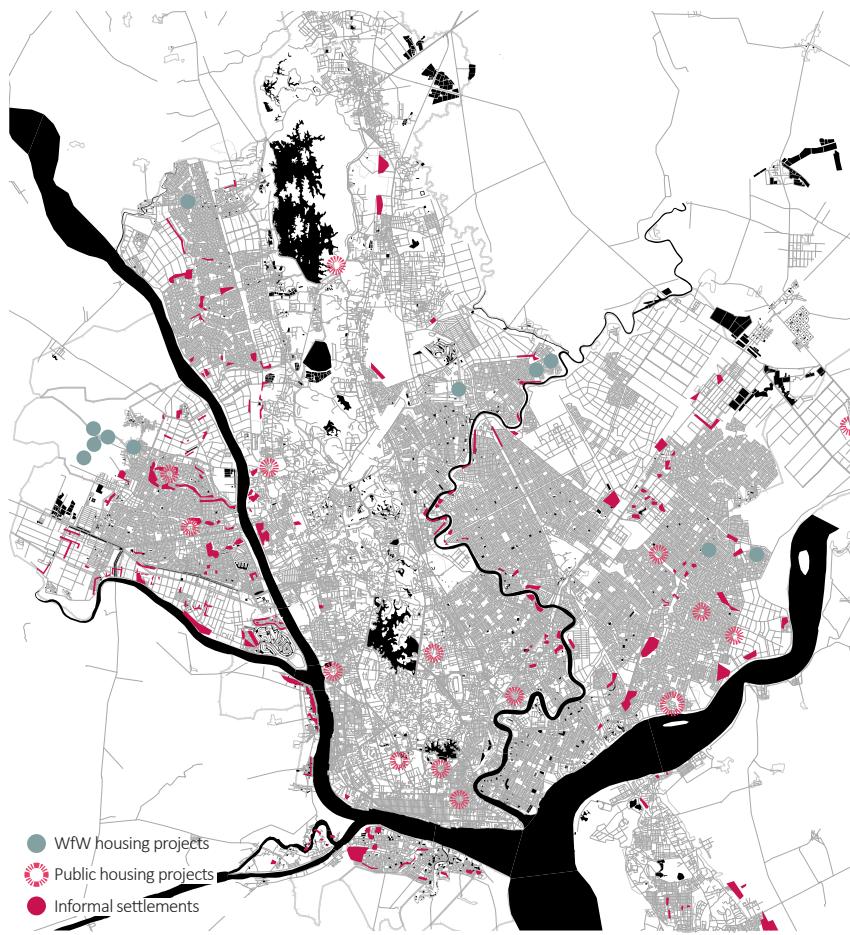


Fig 23. Map indicating the locations of informal settlements, public housing, and community-led housing projects.

financing institutions—many dwellers have opted for self-construction or renting, either on squatted or informally purchased land. Such settlements are usually characterised by poor-quality, non-permanent materials that need regular replacement, and units as small as to imply an “acute lack of private space” (UN-Habitat, 2017a, p. 35). This is further compounded by high density and poor accessibility that create high-risk conditions against disasters. The absence of (virtually any) municipal services –like piped water, drainage and sanitation, electricity and waste management– is to some extent compensated by makeshift infrastructures or systems that the communities build themselves or, at best, with the support of the local ward or township administration (UN-Habitat, 2017a). These, however, are usually more expensive, less reliable and poorly maintained (*ibid.*).

Today, it is estimated that between 10-15%³ of Yangon's population are squatters (Dobermann, 2016), while up to an additional 30% of the city's households is deemed *informal* in one way or another, such as buildings on illegally subdivided land (Forbes, 2016). An intensification of both rural-urban and inter-urban migration in Yangon is already under way, in light of the economic liberalisation and the *promise* for better employment opportunities, the decline in agriculture, the growing rural landlessness and poverty, the dramatically increasing land prices, and the under-supply of affordable housing (ACHR, 2013; Forbes, 2016; UN-Habitat, 2017a). In fact, a study by UN-Habitat (2017a) concludes that informal settlements in the city have been expanding rapidly since 2008, and especially since 2012. Having its origins in the notorious relocations of squatters to hitherto peripheral areas in the 1950s and 1980s, the spatial segregation of informal dwellers persists today, as their settlement patterns follow an outward direction in search of land. For the *newcomers*, peri-urban areas offer the advantages of affordability –mainly due to their informal status and increased flood risk (Boutry, 2018)– and proximity to industries, which constitute the main source of employment for the urban poor (Boutry et al., 2016). At the same time, however, dwellers must face the widespread absence of infrastructure, disruptions in their livelihoods and social networks, and –perhaps most importantly– tenure insecurity.

Aspects of land management

Land management is frequently cited as a *convoluted field* in the country's context. This comes to no surprise considering it is a product of colonial legislation, successive authoritarian regimes, exercise of control over resources, and unrecognised customary practices (Rhoads, 2018). The legislation that stipulates the administration and ownership of land consists of over 70 different laws, amendments and regulations that amount to a rather fragmented and outdated framework (Leckie & Simperingham, 2009). Therein, definitions are often unclear or even contradictory, and the classification of land and tenure types is fairly complex (*ibid.*). This is aggravated by an overcomplicated administrative structure, with around 20 government bodies concerned in different ways with land issues (Nixon et al., 2013). Overlaps in their functions –as well as gaps– generally create confusion over their role and responsibilities, causing lengthy processes and uncertainty over the legality of ownership or use of land (*ibid.*). Next

³ Estimates about the percentage of informal dwellers vary significantly, ranging from 270,000 (JICA, 2013); 365,000 (UN-Habitat, 2017a), 400,000 (Moe Myint, 2017), up to 1,000,000 (Dobermann, 2016).

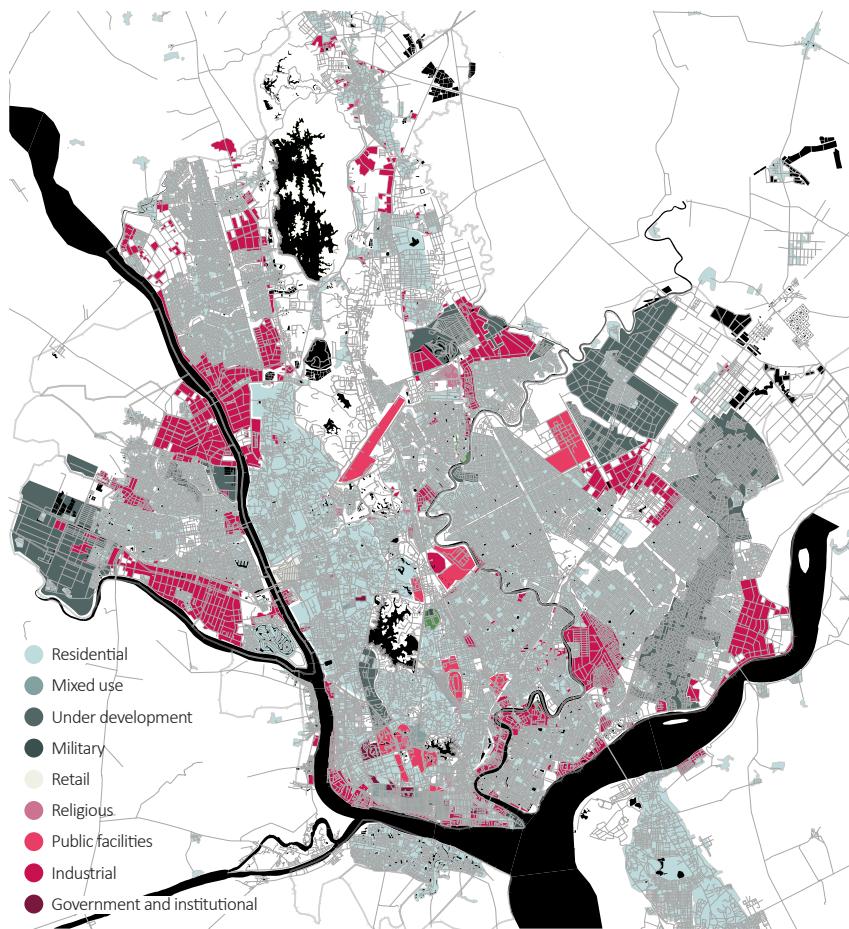


Fig 24. Land use map of Yangon from 2012 based on satellite image analysis.

to that, poor land registration and record keeping add further obstacles to a transparent and coherent land management (Displacement Solutions, 2015).

Violations in the domain of housing, land and property have occurred historically in Myanmar, including forced displacement, confiscation of land and housing, large-scale tenure insecurity, and the lack of adequate compensation rights (Leckie & Simperingham, 2009). While the Constitution of 2008 provides for private property rights, article 37 reaffirms that “the Union is the ultimate owner of all lands and all natural resources above and below the ground, above and beneath the water and in the atmosphere” (Gov. of Myanmar, 2008, p. 10). Further laws, like the Land Acquisition Act (1894) and the Land Nationalisation Act (1953) have formed the basis of the

current land and housing landscape in Myanmar. The first empowers the state to acquire land “if the public interest so requires” (Leckie & Simperingham, 2009, p. 27) and was operationalised to justify massive land confiscations and evictions, while the latter nationalised agricultural land and abolished private ownership, recognising different *land use rights* instead (*ibid.*) Overall, the concentration of power around the state has been the main driver in the development of land and property legislation –all the way from the colonial era, through to the authoritarian establishments (Rhoads, 2018).

Table 3. Overview of legislation relating to land

Land Acquisition Act (1894)	This act empowers the state to acquire land where it is needed for any public purpose. The act provides for the relevant procedures, including the required notice to be given, procedures for objections to acquisition, the method of valuation of land, the process for taking possession of land, court processes and appeals, procedures for the temporary occupation of land and the acquisition of land for corporations. The act requires the authorities to provide compensation to the original owners of the land, however, in practice, compensation often falls far short of basic minimum standards.
Land Nationalisation Act (1953)	Under this Act, the state nationalized all agricultural lands (with certain exceptions) and abolished all lease, rental and share-cropping agreements. The act did not recognise private ownership of land, but only different categories of land use rights-contingent on the land being used productively, as defined by the state. The sale and transfer of ownership were restricted and size limits were established on agricultural holdings.
City of Yangon Development Law (1990)	This law mainly deals with the urban redevelopment and mandatory relocation processes. Under this law, Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) is vested with the authority to “convert Yangon with the characteristics of a city of international standards,” including the official role of relocating informal settlers on the orders of the state.
Constitution (2008)	Under Myanmar law the state owns virtually all land in the country. Article 37 states: The Union (a) is the ultimate owner of all lands and all natural resources above and below the ground, above and beneath the water and in the atmosphere in the Union [and] (b) shall enact necessary law to supervise extraction and utilization of state-owned natural resources.
Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law (2012)	This law allows leases of state-owned land vaguely classified as ‘vacant, fallow or virgin’ for 30 year periods. Both nationals of Myanmar and foreign entities can lease land under this law subject to approval from the Myanmar Investment Commission and then the Land Allotment Commission. Some have claimed that 50% of the land in the country could be classified as technically ‘fallow’, which, if correct, provides an indication that large-scale displacement and land disputes may occur as the new law is implemented.
Farmland Law (2012)	This law establishes a system of land registration for farmers that ostensibly provides land use certificates (LUCs) that, once secured, create rights to sell, exchange, access credit, inherit and lease the land over which they hold rights. Tenure rights under the Farmland Law are not secure because Government retains the power to revoke the LUCs if any of the strict conditions of use are not complied with in full.
Special Economic Zone Law (2014)	This law governs land issues within the special economic zones, addresses the question of land acquisition and places the responsibility on developers and investors to transfer and pay for compensation costs associated with land-based investments.

Land reforms: One step forward, two steps back?

Since the country's political transition and economic liberalisation, land issues have emerged as a central facet of political reforms. With the overarching objective of regulating land governance and addressing long-standing land disputes (Suhardiman et al., 2019), the recent reforms and approaches to land management have rather facilitated investment and enabled large-scale extractive industry and agribusiness (LIOH, 2015; Displacement Solutions, 2015; McCarthy, 2016). The first reforms began during the quasi-civilian government of President Thein Sein (2011-2016); the centrepieces of which have been the *Vacant, Fallow, and Virgin (VFV) Land Management Law* and the *Farmland Law* –both passed in 2012 without open debate or public consultation (McCarthy, 2016). The VFV Law –that intended to allocate vacant land to investors– in reality allowed for further land confiscations from smallholder farmers to bigger companies, as land was almost arbitrarily assigned as vacant –even if it might have been under cultivation (Displacement Solutions, 2015). In parallel, the Farmland Law established a system to register land ownership of agricultural land, and enable the sale, exchange or lease of one's (farm)land use rights (*ibid.*). However, the fact that the majority of farmers lack ownership documentation (*ibid.*), as well as the general lack of clarity about the exact scope and procedures that are deemed necessary, have brought more bewilderment to land transactions –increasing by extent the exposure of certain groups to the risk of eviction (Boutry et al., 2016).

Even efforts that have explicitly aimed to *correct* certain violations and harmonise land governance are often “caught between the centralising and territorialising tendencies of a still highly authoritarian [...] central government” (Suhardiman et al., 2019, p. 370). Characteristically, the formulation of a National Land Use Policy in 2016 is considered by many a step forward, both towards more inclusionary procedures (engaging CSOs, NGOs, aid donors and private sector groups) as well as towards the recognition of community, customary, ethnic and women's rights. Not (yet) legally binding, the policy document is expected to form the basis of the National Land Law, but obstacles posed by the still influential military delay its implementation to date (Suhardiman et al., 2019). In the same spirit, a Parliamentary Land Investigation Commission was established in 2012, with the intention (upon individual investigations) to return land that had been acquired

Fig 25. (Facing page) Typical image of the peripheral areas of the city: agricultural lands subdivided into smaller plots advertised for sale.

by the military through the Land Acquisition Act to its original owners (*ibid.*) and address the problem of compensation (McCarthy, 2016). All the while past injustices were being –sporadically– investigated and corrected on one end, land grabbing still occurred at different levels and scales elsewhere. Ultimately, the Commission was dissolved in 2016, because of the lack of clarity in land policy and the lack of commitment to address compensation disputes (*ibid.*).

These few examples point to the highly contradictory nature of land management and the –still– significant authoritarian elements that persist during the country's democratisation. In the tensions around land one can see the "collusion of economic and political elites linked to the government, military and the corporate sector find[ing] a continuing source of power and control" (Displacement Solutions, 2015, p. 4). Within this pluralistic landscape, rights-based approaches to land governance are being at times enabled, yet more often than not, they are deliberately restricted (Suhardiman et al., 2019, p. 373).





Fig 26. View of the La Min Eain housing project in Shwepaukkan township.

Despite several changes in government and radically different political regimes, land and housing policies have not changed much –in particular with respect to the urban poor who are more susceptible to land grabs and evictions (Rhoads, 2018). Many informal dwellers moved multiple times before they encountered conditions that meet both their needs for security and affordability (UN-Habitat, 2017a) and, even since the country's transition to a quasi-civilian government, evictions continue to occur. In 2016, the NLD Chief Minister declared a zero-tolerance attitude towards squatters (Kyed, 2019); in June 2017, 4,000 dwellers were evicted to make way for high-end developments (RFA, 2017), and small-scale evictions continue to date in several townships (Chandran, 2019). In fact, a report by Land in Our Hands (2015) concludes that even the possession of legal documents has not been a significant factor in protecting people from the confiscation of their lands. It has been argued that these present forms of securitisation of the urban poor are more motivated by economic interests rather than by political interests, as was the case during the military regime (Kyed, 2019, p. 68). Notably, the Myanmar law does not inscribe any specific actions for resettlement and/or livelihood restoration of the displaced (Displacement Solutions, 2015). Without a coherent plan to go along with, multiple relocations are not uncommon; people are forcibly evicted from one place, merely to move to new areas to squat.

Table 4. Community-led housing by Women for the World

Housing Project	Township	Year	Units
Pan Thazin	North Okkalapa	2009	30
Pyit Tine Taung	Hlaingtharyar	2009	64
See Sein Shin	Hlaingtharyar	2017	140
Bawa Pan Tine	Dagon Seikkan	2017	83
Moe San Pan	Dagon Seikkan	2017	59
Taw Win	North Okkalapa	2017	120
Khit Thit May	Shwepyithar	2017	88
San Thit Sa	Hlaingtharyar	2018	96
Hnin San Pan (Part I)	Hlaingtharyar	2018	69
Hnin San Pan (Part II)	Hlaingtharyar	2018	29
La Min Eain	North Okkalapa	2018	58
Total			836

Overall, the fragility of land transactions of the urban poor, their continuous movement towards the city's periphery, and the increased vulnerability of the lands they opt for make very evident that *many of the obstacles to affordable housing can be traced back to land issues*. Within this context it is imperative that the government and other agents of urban change work towards the development of reforms and mechanisms that are inclusive of the needs and aspirations of traditionally marginalised populations, and enable people-centred practices.

WfW's approach

Against accumulating challenges, the practice of *community-led housing* facilitated by WfW has demonstrated ways of supporting the urban poor communities in their pursuit of secure tenure and affordable housing. For WfW, communities are not the *beneficiaries* of assistance; they are key stakeholders and implementers of the entire process –from conducting surveys, to finding land, designing and constructing their houses, mobilising further marginalised groups and strengthening their network. Capitalising on the capacities of informal dweller communities, on several years of advocacy for the housing rights of the urban poor, and on incremental partnerships with key actors and networks, WfW has been promoting people-centred development and trying to challenge long-standing problematic perceptions of informality.



The case of Yogyakarta

by Nada Sallam and Katrin Hofer

Socio-political transformations and urban development

The Republic of Indonesia sits between the Indian and Pacific oceans, bordering Malaysia to the North and Papua New Guinea to the east. As an archipelago of over 17,500 islands, it spans one-eighth of the world's circumference, and is home to roughly 267 million people (Adam et al., 2019). Its national motto –*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, or Unity in Diversity– reflects the country's highly-varied ethnic, religious and linguistic composition, a product of both its size and complex past. Despite its vastness, however, more than half of its population lives on the island of Java –with over 60% of them in urban areas (Zahnd, cited in Sandholz, 2017, p. 190). This rate is expected to rise even further –exceeding 80% in four of the island's provinces by 2035 (Hudalah et al., 2016, p. 186).

These high levels of urbanisation are a relatively recent phenomenon, with most of Indonesia having remained “predominantly rural” under Dutch colonial rule between 1670 and 1949 (Rutz, cited in Sandholz, 2017, p. 191). In fact, the *Transmigrasi* programme, which began during this period actively “sought to transfer families from densely populated regions like Java to other less populated islands” in the country (Sandholz, 2017, p. 190). What did exist of urban Indonesia before independence traditionally took the form of two parallel cities: “an official city built along a main road mainly for civil servants under the jurisdiction of a Mayor, and informal settlements (kampung) located beyond the official city under the jurisdiction of the Regent (Bupati)” (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2015, p. 74). Before the introduction of individual land ownership by the Dutch, land was primarily collectively-used; and often came under the control of local rulers. By 1870, however, the Dutch had passed a law known as the *Agrarische Wet* with the

Fig 27. Mount Merapi, one of the most active volcanoes in Indonesia, overlooking the city of Yogyakarta

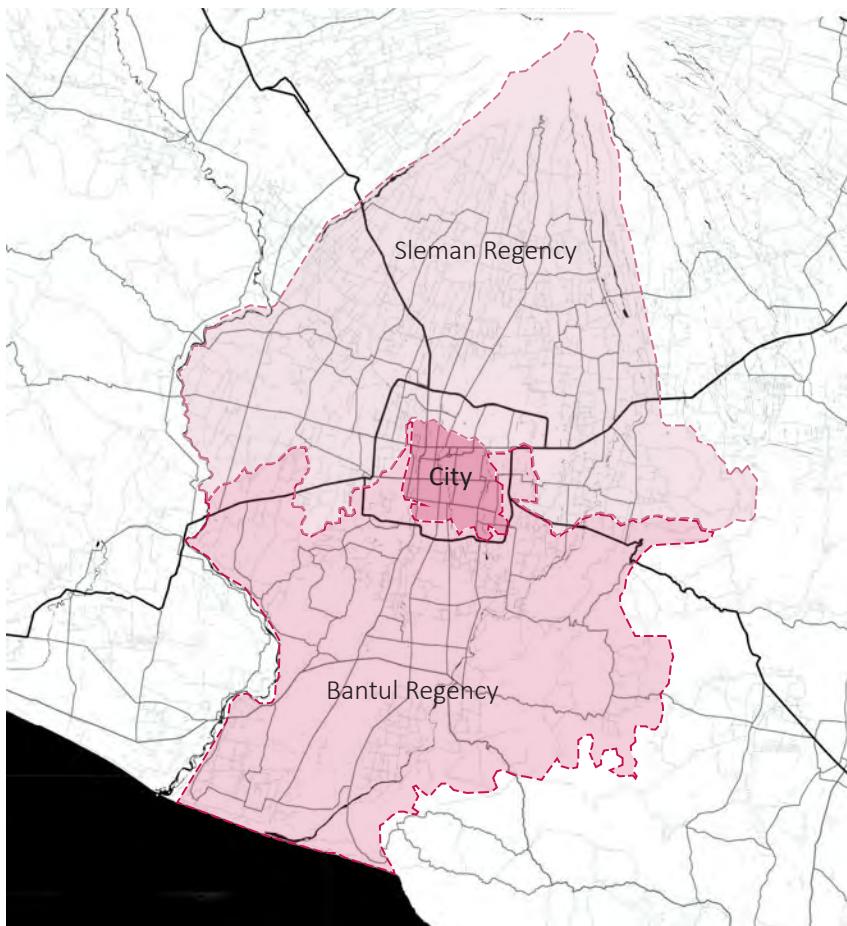


Fig 28. Map of Yogyakarta urban area (Kawasan Perkotaan Yogyakarta (KPY)).

express aim of registering all land in Java –and placing any land on which no title could be proven into the hands of the Dutch state (Rajaguguk, 1988).

In 1945, after almost 300 years of colonial rule, Indonesia declared independence –though this was not recognised by the Dutch until 1949. With the rise of President Sukarno and the period of *Guided Democracy*, the newly-formed Indonesian state began emphasising the importance of nation-building and self-reliance (McLeod & Wickson, 2019). It took on an active role in urban planning, land management and housing provision – establishing the congress of Healthy People's Housing, alongside a Housing Research Institute, and a Housing Finance Institute (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2015, p. 74). In 1960, it introduced the Basic Agrarian Law, outlining the types of land rights that could legally be held by private



Fig 29. Kampung along the Winongo river in Yogyakarta.

individuals and entities. This recognised existing customary land rights, but envisaged that all traditional arrangements would gradually be replaced by new statutory land rights (LANDac, 2012). Despite these various efforts, however, little was done to quell or manage the development of informal settlements resulting from increased rural-urban migration, and the limited availability of affordable housing in cities.

In 1965, a coup d'état was staged, marking the beginning of President Suharto's *New Order*. Between 1968 and 1998, Suharto spearheaded a period of liberal restructuring and "export-led economic growth" (McLeod & Wickson, 2019), the ambitions of which shifted the country's urban development trajectory. Tourism became increasingly important and led to attempts at "beautify[ing] the city through improvements to roads and the modernisation of the physical appearance of urban space" (Sunnyo et al., in Sandholz, 2017, p. 219). The Transmigrasi programme, was resumed, and, in fact, peaked until the decline of Suharto in 1998 (Sandholz, 2017, p. 190). Seen as a crucial contributor to socio-economic stability, Suharto's regime also took a series of steps aimed at addressing the ever-growing demand for housing. Thus, while the market focused primarily on "meeting middle-income need," facilitated by the introduction of mortgage finance (McLeod &

Wickson, 2019), the state turned its attention to urban informal settlements (otherwise known as *kampung*). Despite the negative perceptions of *kampung* and the belief that they represented an “outdated form of housing during early urbanisation” (Larasati, cited in Sandholz, 2017, p. 191), in 1969 the state launched the Kampung Improvement Programme (KIP) with the aim of improving the quality of infrastructure in underserved settlements. KIP represented the world’s first ever slum upgrading programme, and was largely successful, coming to expand its focus beyond the physical, to also include social and economic empowerment.

After protests forced the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, a new era of democratic reform was ushered in, characterised by the introduction of democratic elections, and the adoption of a decentralisation policy. The central government transferred political authority and financial resources to local governments, enabling them to play a larger role in regional development. Then, in 2014, after having served as mayor of Surakarta and governor of Jakarta, Joko Widodo became the country’s 17th president. Widely known for his support for the urban poor, Jokowi’s National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN 2015-19) included a variety of programmes aimed at resolving contemporary land and housing challenges, a matter explored further through the remainder of this report.

Special Region of Yogyakarta

The Special Region of Yogyakarta –or Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta– is located in Central Java, covering an area of around 3,200 km² which includes Yogyakarta city, and the regencies of Sleman, Bantul, Gunung Kidul, and Kulon Progo. Currently, 70% of its 3.68 million inhabitants live in urban areas, “making it the second most densely populated province in Indonesia” (Sandholz, 2017, p. 193).

Between 1945 and 1949, Yogyakarta served as the capital, and a key economic hub in the country. In 1950, it was granted ‘special region’ status in recognition for its contribution during the independence struggle and was permitted to remain a sultanate, despite Indonesia’s establishment as a democratic republic. As a result, Yogyakarta today falls under the jurisdiction of a Sultan, who serves as both a “hereditary monarch” with a range of traditional responsibilities, as well as a Governor, “granting him the same authority and responsibilities as any other governor in the country, with the difference that he is not bound to legislative periods” (Höflich de Duque; Salazar, cited in Sandholz, 2017, p. 193).



Fig 30. Different morphologies of Yogyakarta (top to bottom): the Sultan's palace, mid-city settlements along Winongo river, settlements along Gajah Wong river, and peri-urban area in Bantul regency.

Yogyakarta is seen by many as a “socially-progressive model” of decentralisation in Indonesia (Hudalah et al., cited in Roitman, 2016, p. 195), with a multi-tiered governance structure (illustrated below). Crucially, this has not been without its challenges, as power and influence at the various levels have been used unfairly, and frequently fail to account for the voices and demands of those at the grassroots.

A key source of pride in Yogyakarta, is its title as the centre of Javanese culture. Tourism, both domestic and international, serves as one of its main industries, with visitors drawn to the province’s rich history and tradition. Higher education serves as a second key sector in Yogyakarta, with over 90 universities and higher learning institutions (Sandholz, 2017, p. 192) including Gadjah Mada University, the country’s oldest and most renowned. The third key sector in Yogyakarta is agriculture, which remains particularly important in the regencies surrounding Yogyakarta city.

Table 5. Governance Structure: Yogyakarta Province

Province (Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta)		Details	
Governor		Sultan from Yogyakarta (not elected)	
Vice-Governor		Sultan from Pakualaman (not elected)	
City (Yogyakarta)	Details	Regencies (Bantul, Sleman, Gunung Kidul, Kulon Progo)	Details
Mayor	Elected/Salaried	Bupati	Elected/Salaried
Vice Mayor	Elected/Salaried	Vice Bupati	Elected/Salaried
Kecamatan (District) Leader	Appointed (Civil Servant)/ Salaried	Kecamatan (District) Leader	Appointed (Civil Servant)/ Salaried
Kelurahan (Village) Leader	Appointed (Civil Servant)/ Salaried	Desa (Village) Leader	Elected/Salaried (from village budget which includes land revenue)
None		Padukuhan (Sub-Village) Leader	Elected/Salaried (from Village Budget)
Rukun Warga (RW) Leader (Neighbourhood Level- Approximately 250 households)	Elected/Non-Salaried	Rukun Warga (RW) Leader (Neighbourhood Level - Approximately 250 households)	Elected/Non-Salaried
Rukun Tetangga (RT) Leader (Neighbourhood Level- Between 20 and 50 households)	Elected/Non-Salaried	Rukun Tetangga (RT) Leader (Neighbourhood Level- Between 20 and 50 households)	Elected/Non-Salaried

The combination of its special region status, the existence of the sultanate, and its three key industries, have significantly influenced Yogyakarta's urban development trajectory. First, as a special region, the province has been exempt from various national laws, including the aforementioned Basic Agrarian Law. Consequently, the Sultanate continues to own large tracts of land which it is entitled to rent out or sell as it sees fit. Given the Sultan's role as Governor, this large-scale land ownership presents both opportunities and challenges for inclusive urban development. On the one hand, the sultanate can use its influence and resources to ensure the availability of adequate and affordable land. In fact, to date, many people reside on Sultan's land with informal agreements inherited over generations. However, given its own business interests, and the ever-increasing value of land in Yogyakarta, the sultanate's position as both *gamekeeper and poacher* –shaping laws and being directly impacted by them– can also produce less favourable results for the urban poor. In combination with the pressures of inner-city densification, it is likely that such informal agreements will gradually fail to suffice, and lead to increased incidents of eviction and displacement.

Second, as the tourism sector has continued to grow, so too has the value of land, with hotel developers competing over what limited land availability there is. This presents an immediate threat to urban equality, as marginalised communities are forced out of the centre to make way for tourism-related infrastructure and facilities. Ironically, this “rapid modernisation” also poses a threat to tourism itself as Yogyakarta risks losing “its main selling point for tourism” namely, its charm “as a village-like city” (Sandholz, 2017, p. 208). A related consequence of development in the city has been that as more land is needed, and more people are pushed out into the periphery, plots of agricultural land are increasingly being converted into residential and commercial areas, posing a long-term threat to the province’s agricultural sector. As these pressures continue to mount, the importance of ensuring that space is available for the less-advantaged residents of the city becomes increasingly salient. Whether Yogyakarta’s unique characteristics will enable or hinder such inclusive development remains to be seen.



Contextualising people-centred approaches to housing

Yogyakarta is experiencing an increase in squatting and a rising number of slums due to lack of access to formal land and affordable housing. Such settlements are characterised by overcrowding and a lack of infrastructure services and construction safety (Iqbal, 2018; UN-Habitat, 2003). Despite the broad range of illegal, informal and formal tenure types in these settlements (Raharjo, 2010), they are usually characterised by extremely weak de jure and/or de facto tenure security (Hellman, 2018). Typically, they form in six locations in Yogyakarta: along rivers, along the railway, in the area around the Sultan's palace, in inner-city blocks or through cemetery squatting and the occupation of abandoned buildings (Raharjo, 2010; Iqbal, 2018).

In Indonesia, an urban slum is referred to as a kampung (Guinness, 2016). The term kampung however also refers to traditional forms of settlements and is therefore synonymously used for “home community” and the lowest level of (informal) community organisation” (Sullivan, cited in Sandholz, 2017, p. 191). Such settlements have hybrid characteristics and cannot all be seen as illegal, as most of them –regardless of their unauthorised status– are recognised in their RT/RW and administered through the same governance system (Raharjo, 2010). Whereas they are often seen as pockets of poverty and “a homogeneous mass of helpless individuals” (Guinness, 2016, p. 208), they provide a home for residents with different socio-economic backgrounds. And within the dichotomy of being neglected and recognised, they “have devised a vast range of informal strategies to facilitate survival, including informal trading and production, informal housing solutions and informal governance” (ibid., p. 206) of their kampung. Kampung are often constituted of strong communities, who “play an active role in the making of the city” (ibid., p. 208). However, despite the increasing recognition of kampung being vital parts of the city, negative stereotypes prevail (Astuti, 2017).

Land governance and management

The land tenure system in Yogyakarta is highly complex. It is built on customary and statutory rights and is characterised by a dualism, which stems from the country’s colonial past. Alongside the customary land system (*adat* land system), the Dutch introduced property laws, focussing on individual private land ownership (Obeng-Odoom & McDermott, 2018). Today, land policy in Indonesia is primarily regulated by the Basic Agrarian Law (BAL, Law No.

Fig 31. Kampung in Yogyakarta's inner city.

Life in the urban kampung: Mutual assistance in Indonesia

Community life in Indonesia is traditionally guided by the philosophy of *Gotong Royong*, which is “based on togetherness expressed through mutual aid, cooperation and reciprocity” (Iqbal, 2018, p. 1). The concept is grounded in everyday life in Indonesia and is usually built on relations of kinship, friendship and neighbourhood. *Gotong Royong* refers to the unquestioned duty of everyone to contribute to the common good and is based on the assumption that problems can be better solved together (*ibid.*). The concept of *Gotong Royong* historically emerged in the context of rural villages, where agricultural and communal work was done collectively. However, *Gotong Royong* also found its way into urban kampung communities, where it facilitates a strategy of survival, which includes “bartering, exchanging, borrowing, and lending goods and services” (*ibid.*, p. 9). It is an important social asset of Indonesian societies and can take various forms –some being institutionalised practices whereas others remain largely un-institutionalised.



5/1960), which classifies land rights and provides the foundation for land regulation and management. Since independence, various laws, regulations and administrative directives have been passed. However, they often overlap and are in conflict with each other (Daryono, 2010). As a consequence, different systems of land certification exist in parallel. Yet, the BAL remains the main point of reference and the general basis and direction has not changed since (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2015).

In Yogyakarta, another layer of complexity is added due to the Special Region status. The Privileges of Yogyakarta (Law No. 13/2012) not only acknowledge the Sultanate as an institution but also enable it to own land. Land registered in the Sultanate's name is called Sultan's Ground. People residing on or making use of Sultan's Ground hold secondary land rights. As Sultan's Ground is managed and administered by its own land agency (*Panitikismo*), these usage rights differ from the land rights set out by the BAL. Whereas theoretically, national law is considered the highest frame of reference and should also be applicable in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, in practice it is not always clear which system is the stronger framework of reference.

Meanwhile, the land registration process itself is complicated and lacks transparency. Since 1981, the Indonesian government has introduced various land registration programmes (Reerink, 2011). The current land registration programme –*Pendaftaran Tanah Sistematis Lengkap* (PTSL)– was introduced in 2017. It is free of charge for beneficiaries and runs from 2018 to 2025. Despite these efforts, figures from 2010 show that only 30% of all land parcels (other than areas classified as forests or for mining purposes) has been formally registered in Indonesia (Daryono, 2010). There are various reasons why many households have not formally registered their land, including a lack of transparency of the process and the uncertainty about the involved costs and time requirements (Hudalah et al., 2016). Additionally, there are cases in which registration has also been put on hold because of unclear property rights and contestation about the rightful ownership of the land. Such contestations happen on unregistered land. However, as several landowners hold a certificate for the same plot of land, they also occur on plots that have already been titled according to BAL.

Because of the Special Region status, the implementation of the land registration programme in Yogyakarta is different than in the rest of the country. Here, all unregistered land processed through the PTS programme is registered as Sultans Ground. The people residing on the respective land will receive the Sultanate's permission to use the land and thus hold secondary land titles. This is linked to the Sultanate's claim that all of the land in the

Fig 32. Borobudur temple, the world's largest Buddhist temple, located about 40 kilometres northwest of Yogyakarta.



Fig 33. The Sultan's emblem signalling that this plot of land is Sultan's Ground.

province without private ownership title is Sultan's Ground. As of today, there is no official data available on how much land the Sultan owns in the province, and estimates of the share of Sultan's Ground vary greatly between authors (from 9.6% - 60% of the total land). Regardless of how much land is actually registered as Sultan's Ground, the Sultanate is an important land owner in Yogyakarta province. Urban dwellers also occupy Sultan's Ground –especially in the inner-city and along the rivers. Even though they do not have an official permission, this has largely been tolerated so far. However, as inner-city density increases and competition around well-located land prevail, it is questionable whether this benevolent tradition will continue (Sandholz, 2017).

In Indonesia, formal land tenure does not only give residents de jure security and protects them from being evicted from their land, it is also a prerequisite for the access of government-led housing and settlement improvement programmes. Tenure security is therefore also linked to being recognised as citizens. And it is thus often “not the illegality of land tenure that *kampung* residents consider to be a problem; rather it is how their rights as citizens are affected because of the status of their land tenure” (Winayanti, cited in Hellman, 2018, p. 56). The following pages give an overview of the land rights and modes of land occupation in Yogyakarta.

Land in Yogyakarta

Land ownership in Indonesia is registered with the National Land Agency (Badan Pertanahan Nasional, BPN). According to the BAL (Article 16 Paragraph 1), there are 13 specific land rights. Relevant to urban areas are primarily the following:

Table 6. Statutory land rights in Indonesia	
Right of ownership / <i>Hak milik</i>	Right to use the land for any interests. There is no specific title validity period. Granted to Indonesian citizens and corporate bodies only. Can be used as collateral. Primary title.
Right to build / <i>Hak Guna Bangunan</i>	Right to construct or to possess buildings. Same conditions as the right to ownership, except only for max. 30 years with a possible extension of max. 20 years. It is either granted for state land (primary title) or privately-owned land (secondary title).
Right to cultivate / <i>Hak Guna Usaha</i>	The right to cultivate the land. It is valid for 25 years for individuals or 35 years for Indonesian Legal Entities. The right can be extended for another 25 years. Secondary title.
Right to rent buildings / <i>Hak Sewa untuk Bangunan</i>	Right to use a parcel of land owned by someone else with the authorisation to use the land for building purposes. It is a lease agreement for a defined period of time to use the land in exchange for an agreed rent. Secondary title.
Right to use / <i>Hak Pakai</i>	The right to use state land or private land as a building site or for agricultural purposes. Granted to Indonesian citizens, Indonesian legal entities, foreign citizens who reside in Indonesia and foreign legal entities with representation in Indonesia. Unlike the right to ownership, this cannot be used as collateral. It is either granted indefinitely for a specific use (will lapse once that use comes to an end) or for a limited period of years for unspecified use. Secondary title.

Alongside these statutory land rights, a broad range of customary land rights still exist today. Across Indonesia, the most common customary rights are the following:

Table 7. Customary land rights	
<i>Girik</i>	During the colonial period, girik was a term referring to a land tax that was paid on indigenous farmland.
<i>Garapan</i>	Garapan refers to the right to cultivate and work on farmland issued by the Village leader.
<i>Letter C</i>	Before the introduction of the BAL, private property was registered by the village head and land holders were issued a Letter C.
<i>Model D / Petok D</i>	Similar to the Letter C, however this private property has been initially registered with the Dutch colonial government at that time, which issued a certificate to the land owner. The land ownership was then also registered in the Villages book (buku C).

Yogyakarta knows additional customary land rights, which are only applicable within the boundaries of the Special Region. These include:

Table 8. Specific customary land rights in Yogyakarta			
<i>Ngindung</i>	Customary right to build houses on privately-owned land or to inhabit a part of an existing building, relying on communal relationships. The agreement between landowner and the Ngindung holder can be written or oral. The house cannot be of permanent construction and the tenant's right to use the land can be inherited without a specific agreement of the landowner and the agreement of a new contract. Tenants mostly pay a rent of symbolic value.	Right to use (Hak Pakai) ⁴ Precondition: hak milik title for land & proof of Ngindung agreement (e.g. written contract, witnesses)	
<i>Magersari</i>	Customary right to build houses on Sultan's ground granted to individuals, government, institutions and foundations. Tenants sign a written contract (=kekacangan letter) which includes details regarding rent, compensation, notice period and other commitments. Magersari titles can expire and the Sultanate has the right to take the land back, if needed. Holders of a kekacangan letter may not sell their title but have the right to let other people stay on their land with Ngindung agreements. Such transfers of land to third parties may not be carried out without the permission of the Sultanate. Magersari titles are hereditary.	n/a	
<i>Hak Pinjam Pakai</i>	The right to borrow and use or to build buildings on Sultan's Ground for a defined period of time. Holders of Hak Pinjam Pakai also receive a kekacangan letter, which is hereditary. The letter for such a lease-to-use initially covers a period of ten years and can be extended for another twenty years. If the agreement includes the right to build buildings, the initial period is thirty years, which can be extended for another twenty years respectively. The land cannot be used for any other purpose than stated in the agreement and the right holders are required to pay annual rental fees. Once the agreement comes to an end, the right holder needs to return the land in its original condition and is not entitled to any compensation for what has been built/planted.	n/a	
<i>Anganggo</i>	Customary individual rights granted to individuals or institutions to use Sultan's Ground. Anganggo right is hereditary. It is only applicable in the rural regencies.	With permission of the Village, Anganggo could be converted into a Letter C (now convertible into hak milik)	
<i>Anggaduh</i>	Customary communal rights granted to a community to use Sultan's Ground for as long as it is used. Anggaduh right is hereditary and also only applicable in the rural regencies.	n/a	
<i>Andarbe</i>	Customary individual right of ownership granted to individuals or institutions by the Sultanate. This is only applicable in Yogyakarta city.	Right of ownership (hak milik)	

⁴ In some cases (exceptions), a Ngindung agreement can also be converted into a right to build (Hak Guna Bangunan) or a right to rent buildings (Hak Sewa untuk Bangunan).

Land ownership in Yogyakarta

Land in Yogyakarta is classified into four categories: private land, Sultan's Ground, state land and unregistered land. Thus, the following entities can be landowners and hold primary land titles in Yogyakarta:

- Indonesian citizens
- Legal entities
- Collectives
- Sultanate
- Villages (Kas Desa)⁵
- State
- Companies with a state-mandate (e.g. for infrastructure).

Contested land (registered and unregistered) is referred to as Sengketa land.

Mode of land occupation/ land use

Land is occupied and used in various ways. The modes of occupying and using land for residential purposes can be summarised in the following five categories: Landowners use it for their own purposes, renting, Ngindung, Magersari, and squatting. These refer to the primary mode of land and housing occupation. Through inheritance and various forms of formal and non-formal subleases, the mode of occupation gains on complexity.

⁵ Kas Desa is land registered as Sultan's Ground while the village hold Anggaduh rights. This type of land only exists in the rural regencies of Yogyakarta Province, namely Bantul, Gunung Kidul, Kulon Progo and Sleman regency.

The right to adequate housing

The Indonesian Constitution guarantees citizens the right to adequate housing. Beyond having a roof over one's head, this also includes guaranteeing (a) legal security of tenure; (b) availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure; (c) affordability; (d) habitability; (e) accessibility; (f) location; and (g) cultural adequacy (OHCHR, 2013). The responsibility for housing policies and programmes in Indonesia lies with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing. The National Planning Agency (Bappenas) is responsible for the coordination of housing policies and for their compatibility with the National Development Plans (*ibid*).

In 2015, almost 20% of all Indonesia's 64,1 million households lived in poor housing conditions (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2015). Most houses are built by the owner or occupier; approximately 70-80% of all houses in Yogyakarta can be classified as self-built houses (Astuti, 2017; World Bank, 2012). This includes formal housing, meaning houses that are built with a building permit, as well as informal housing which is not in compliance with official planning and building regulations. In the kampung, houses are mostly built incrementally by the communities themselves (Guinness,

Fig 34. Informal housing right behind one of the main streets in Yogyakarta.



2016). Kampung are thus largely developed by community-driven processes (Raharjo, 2010). Despite the dominant role of communities, the trend in the housing market is largely directed by the private sector. To ensure the highest possible profit, the private sector primarily targets almost exclusively middle- or high-income households (Tunas & Peresthu, 2010). That results in a lack of formal housing solutions for urban poor (Hudalah et al., 2016). Due to the numerous obstacles urban poor are facing in accessing housing with secure rights, they inhabit and form kampung, which are thus “substantial and practical accommodation of many urban low-income families” (Tunas & Peresthu, 2010, p. 315).

Living in urban Yogyakarta

As elaborated above, urban population growth and economic and tourism development in Yogyakarta put increasing pressure on the limited land. The increasing competition for land leads to increasing land prices. This not only creates a challenge for urban poor to access new land in strategic locations, but also generates a threat for urban poor informally inhabiting the city. As their tenure security is weak, they are often insufficiently protected from structural drivers and are at risk to be pushed out of the city. This is true in cases of informal and illegal land occupation. However, also urban dwellers with formal ownership titles are not fully protected from the risk of having to vacate their land in case of land acquisition for public investment by the state (Kirk et al., 2014). At the same time, kampung residents that have been living in the city for a long time have acquired a sense of legitimisation to inhabit their spaces, despite the fact many of them have no legal rights over this claim (Tunas & Peresthu, 2010). Other factors beyond de jure land and housing rights inform people's resilience to the threat of eviction. These include their economic capacity and social capital. Moreover, there are certain characteristics that disadvantage urban dwellers to access land and housing and impact their tenure security. Such factors include –but are not restricted to– residents' gender, religion, culture/race, sexual orientation, and their rural-urban migration background (OHCHR, 2013; Juke, 2019).

Urban poor's reality in the city is further entrenched by several shortcomings of past and current state-led approaches to urban development. One of these shortcomings is linked to the fact that most infrastructure and housing programmes by the government can only be accessed if land issues have been resolved. That excludes a large share of people from such services and programmes –especially low-income households. Weak de jure tenure security thus does not only expose urban dwellers to the threat of eviction but also excludes them from housing and settlement upgrading programmes.

Weaknesses in urban development are furthermore linked to the law and formal institutions in Indonesia. Daryono (2010, pp. 2-3) summarises these key challenges as the “lack of legal certainty and predictability in the positive law and formal legal institutions; lack of accommodation to existing legal culture; and lack of adequate governance”. Inefficient bureaucratic procedures, limited state resources and poor implementation and enforcement impact the possibility of urban poor to access government support (Daryono, 2010; Hudalah et al., 2016). Additionally, criticism has been voiced in regard to the lack of meaningful participation (Hudalah et al., 2016). Public participation is often seen as a “technical or political formality” (*ibid.*, p. 192) and, as the city grows, the space for community participation in decision-making shrinks. One of the main urban development challenges in Yogyakarta is thus “how to balance economic and social development in a spatial manner” (Fürstenberg, 2017, p. 44). Contributing to more sustainable and socially just urban trajectories in Yogyakarta is one of Arkom’s main goals.

Arkom’s approach

Arkom has recognised tenure security as a key issue for urban poor in Yogyakarta. In a participatory study on multidimensional poverty in Yogyakarta, Arkom found that involved communities named the insecurity of land occupancy, the threat of eviction and the complexity of their land occupancy status as the main factors contributing to their deprivation (Kusworo et al., 2016). The study concludes that addressing the insecurity of land for housing is of key importance (*ibid*). Arkom has initiated different projects to help communities to move from the precarious end of the tenure security spectrum to a more secure position. Within these projects, Arkom takes a people-centred approach and acts as an enabler and facilitator. Communities are encouraged to actively participate and to implement the projects themselves. Arkom helps mobilising, links the communities with other stakeholders and offers technical assistance where needed.



A black and white photograph of a young girl with dark hair pulled back, wearing a light-colored top and patterned pants. She is holding a large, open umbrella over her head. The umbrella has some text and symbols printed on it, though they are not clearly legible. She is standing in a grassy field with other people and trees in the background.

Chapter III. PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACHES TO HOUSING IN YANGON



Bridging scales:

WfW in securing broader recognition for the low-income community

by Aji Bima Amriza Amalsyah

As elaborated in the introduction, WfW is a small organisation with a vision to help low-income families in Myanmar to attain better living quality. Most of these families are gathered under the WSDN. Unavoidably, Myanmar's political and social dynamics are providing various opportunities and challenges which are being tweaked by WfW to realise their vision. These opportunities are being explored by looking at how Levy (1996), put it; it is a room for manoeuvre, which made the organisation possible to ignite a change. On the other side, the challenges are limiting the availability of the room for manoeuvre. In WfW practices, this room for manoeuvre will be overviewed by using lenses in WfW's capacity as a social planner; it is described as "... a degree of freedom, open to practitioners in promoting progressive intervention in urban affairs" (Safier, 2002, p. 127). This idea aligns with WfW's idea to attain better living of the people by helping them through the housing. The people that get WfW facilitation have limitations in terms of income, resource access, and opportunities. It even moves the problem further, whereas, for them, social injustice in the form of forced eviction happened quite often. As being described in the previous chapter, while the radical changes of government happen, the practices of it pretty much stays the same, and it becomes one of the ongoing challenges. As to achieve formal recognition from the government, are one of the ways to make the most low-income households to escape the grip of adverse living conditions.

Fig 35. Women from the Saving and Development Network.

WfW aims to solve the issues by including and engaging numbers of actors in their programmes. They do it by *building partnerships* (with DPU UCL, Association of Myanmar Architects (AMA), ACHR, CAN, Yangon Technological University (YTU) and Myanmar Architectural School), *expanding and strengthening their facilitated networks* (with WSDN, CBP), and *forming strategic alliances* (with Microfinance Institutions (MFI), DUHD and other governmental agencies). They also made their presence in the public area more prominent by organising seminars, public hearing, releasing documentary video, and publishing articles in the media. This chapter will try to look at the growth of WfW as an organisation by describing each vital milestone and analysing it through the lenses of inter-organisational relationships. It will then be aligned to perceive whether it could impact the establishment of the organisation, especially in its relationship with the Myanmar government, in undergoing the alternative approach in the next chapter.

WfW, saving groups, and housing projects: how it all began

Cyclone Nargis, which happened in 2008, became a catalyst that changed Myanmar course of history and marked as a turning point of the organisation. The severe damage to the infrastructure changed the country in at least two ways; it made the country to consider opening up for the international aid agency, while also causing the massive number migration of the displaced people to Yangon. This situation leads to an available opportunity (fundings from financial aids) and challenge (substantial increase in displaced people). WfW, who was already operating in the area of women empowerment collaborated and got connected with ACHR through their ACCA programme in Kungyangon, Mandalay, and Yangon. Among the series of programme, ACHR was not only working with WfW but also with other local NGOs such as Aung Zabu Foundation and Bedar Rural Development Programme. The principle that WfW has, to make the community self-sustained through saving groups, was being combined with the vision of ACHR. It adds *obtaining house* as a way for low-income households to escape poverty. Both organisations also have similar grounded ideas shared between them, which is, “simply letting people do things themselves, rather than an NGO or an aid agency doing things for them” (ACHR, 2013). It made the process of building the relationship went well. Several challenges are happening; some of them were including the community that they facilitated. However, it could be seen that their relationship is still going strong, as their programmes stand the test of time. It keeps scaling up even when a decade has passed.

Pilot projects between the WfW and ACHR began when WfW were



Fig 36. Women at the regular meeting of their savings group. - Giorgia Talocci

implementing and distributing ACCA funds from ACHR in 2008. The project directly targets the community impacted by the cyclone, one of them being the 15 villages in Kungyangon. One thing to be noted is because of the principle mentioned above; the programme tried to be inclusive and participatory. WfW was raising the money to fulfil the necessities of the people such as medicines and rebuilding the necessary shelter. With the primary goal of the projects, to rebuild the people's destroyed houses, neighbourhood, and also to recover their agricultural-based livelihoods, this project began with dialogue, surveys, and meetings in order to set their priorities in managing the received funds.

WfW has experience in the women empowerment. During the process of setting up the Village Development Committee as a part of the ACHR programme, WfW starts to encourage the women in the community to do their savings. In a few months, these saving groups became bigger, and the process of lending, borrowing, and managing the village funds are becoming more prominent in the community. The more vulnerable households began to get access to the capital fund which they could use not only to fix their house or neighbourhood, but also emergency cases such as medical fees, or big projects such as starting a business (ACHR, 2013). This flow-model of

saving groups towards housing became the model of WfW future projects. However, at the time, this bottom-up method used by WfW and ACHR is not yet noticed, amidst clusters of top-down development programmes in the country. These programmes made ACHR as one of the leading room for manoeuvre providers for WfW to keep building their networks and scaling up their internal and external capacities in the future, especially within the international community. WfW were utilising this partnership collaboration to reach stakeholders from various backgrounds.

WfW's manoeuvre in the realm of inter-organisational relationship: facilitating the community and bridging them with multiple stakeholders

After the post-cyclone community rebuilding project, WfW was continuing their projects in facilitating low-income households who mainly live in informal settlements. WfW involved them under the saving groups, which established as WSDN later on. Their first step was to bring the saving-housing scheme into the urban context in Yangon. This time, when the project began in May 2009, it was followed by a CAN Workshop in August 2010. Two professional architects facilitated this workshop, providing aid and facilitation in terms of housing and neighbourhood design, and it runs for three days. By working together with them, the workshop improved the capacities of the community and ignited the first precedent of the affordable urban-housing projects by WfW in Myanmar. This workshop was followed by the implementation of three different housing projects simultaneously at the time, and it keeps being held from time to time. The latest series of workshops invited community architect from several different countries in 2019.

Nevertheless, still, this saving-housing project scheme of the WSDN was not running without challenges; the earlier saving groups emerged during a period where distrust enveloped the activities. At the time, the government was not allowing a big gathering of people and was disbanding the meeting when they found out about it. In one case, they even took the money the community have been saving. There are also cases where the leader of the saving groups run away with the community's money. This case made the community reconsider themselves multiple times before they decide to join the saving group. However, amidst these challenges, the facilitated organisation/ network grows exponentially since 2009. It began with around eight members to 2,300 members in 2013, and more than 30,000 members in 2019. The consistency and tenacity shown by WfW played a big part in aiding this growth process.



Fig 37. Meeting of a WSG together with WfW at the organisation's office space.

The WSDN became a core vessel for the low-income household to work together and create the opportunity for themselves. There are managing their internal programmes, such as saving group rules and regulations. It was shown in the way they divide the work. Originally, WfW and its youth group member facilitators were the ones who disseminate and train the new saving group organs. They approached the informal settlers to set up a saving group and organised necessary workshops for them. However, currently, the more experienced WSDN members were the one who did that instead. This process made WSDN semi-autonomous in their growth and made WfW could be able to focus on a different matter, which is, accommodating the planning process, programmes facilitation, and building the community's capacity and networks.

One of the examples, in 2012, WfW was helping in organising the National Saving Workshops. Later, this workshop turned annually. It became one of the main events to disseminate the ideas, principles, and current results of saving-housing scheme group communities. Another example, in the same year, March 2012, from the networks of ACHR, WfW and WSDN were invited to get linked with other similar organisations in Urban Poor Coalition Asia (UPCA), Philippines. It was organised with the idea to balance the drowned

voice of people from low-income families. It connects Myanmar WfW & WSDN with various communities from Thailand, Philippines, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and others. There is an exchange of knowledge between organisations from the organisation which come from different backgrounds and level of engagement. Some of them are working at the governmental level, while others are working at the level of community organisation. The Myanmar team were sharing their programme and progress, and in exchange, got inputs, recommendations, and also valuable experience and learning from others. As Somsook Boonyabancha, ACHR Secretary-General, put it, "This kind of processes is always two ways, we have come to Myanmar to see how we can share our knowledge and contribute to the change process here. After spending a day visiting several of your (WfW's) projects, we find that we all have much to learn from the inspiring work you are doing here. This [the saving groups and housing projects] is our new culture of working together and putting our forces together to make a change in our countries and our cities" (ACHR, 2013, p. 25). Even more valuable than the knowledge, they got a connection between each other and built up their social capital.

WfW was making an approach towards the government after the UPCA (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, the scaling up was taking their next step when the

Fig 38. Members of the Community Bithukar Platform at a workshop with a community. - CBP



next national workshop happened in 2013. It was the first National Saving Workshop where the Myanmar government were invited and involved. Amongst the people, planners from YCDC and members from the Yangon parliamentary were present, and it became one of the pioneering moments where government attend a seminar where the community themselves were delivering the speech instead of a professional or aid agencies. This workshop was also attended by representatives from development agencies, such as UN-Habitat Myanmar, the media, professional and community leaders, and also 20 international participants who gathered under the ACHR Networks.

In this workshop, the government were presenting their plans to develop 25 industrial zones in Yangon. From it, one crucial lesson had been found; there were gaps between the practices on the ground and the government's programme. There were massive development plans of the industrial zones but no place for settlements. Even though the government are building a low-cost apartment building which targeted the informal settlers, the prices were still too high for them. However, the events become the first glimpse of recognition from the government. Furthermore, this workshop had garnered media attention. Media exposure is crucial in garnering attention and approval from the side of government. Methods such as television interview, newspaper articles, and public discussion or seminar are being held to get public attention. The media follow the information, and they advocate the programme while people outside of the closed community linked with each other. The follow up had been done to the government, mainly to the DUHD and YCDC. Following the workshop, WfW continues to build their relationship within the ACHR networks, along with the growth of WSDN and the number of improvements and reiteration of each housing projects.

During the workshop at the end of 2016 in Myanmar, one of the DPU lecturers from MSc Building and Urban Design in Development (BUDD), UCL, was invited as a participant. That meeting ignites a spark of the relationship between WfW and academic institutions, which leads to the organising of DPU Annual field trip workshop in the following year. Practised directly in the community facilitated by WfW, it involves students from BUDD UCL with Yangon's architectural students. AMA was involved in providing related workshops/ training and also a room for the students to work on their projects. As another mark in WfW's milestone, the field trip also leaves multiple opportunities. One of them was the creation of CBP in 2017, after the first field trip. CBP is a network of architect students. It exists to build a connection to the professional field and acquiring experience of many other architectural related subjects which not taught in the university, one of them

WfW & DPU's FIELD TRIP in Yangon, Myanmar

DPU's field trip in Yangon was initiated in 2016, during the ACHR & CAN joint workshop in Myanmar. It began in 2017 and continues to 2019. This programme is facilitated by WfW, in collaboration with AMA and YTU, by making the master students of BUDD Student synthesise the hands-on experience of using the lesson they learned from their studies for the community. The process begins since the students are still studying in London and continue even after they come back from Myanmar. For several years, it has been organised under the theme of transformation in a time of transition. This programme increases the international exposure of the situation in Myanmar and also acts as a knowledge management practices through post-programme products such as student reports and fellowship booklets.

Taking a look at how this field trip progressing throughout the year, this workshop expands the establishment of a further partnership with other stakeholders. It was noticed from the increasing numbers of participating stakeholders each year. As the UPCA goes, this programme connects its members both ways. This field trip becomes yet another platform of WfW to approach the government by inviting them into the workshop. This field trips were different from previous activities WfW has done previously as the invited international academic institution, collaborating with local academic institutions, was directly participating instead of just attending the programme. It resulted in-amidst difficulties and challenges which came each year- solutions for the community they came to work with.

Furthermore, aside from the content of the field trip itself, several strategic meetings outside of the field trip with essential figures from the government and parliament were also being organised. WfW facilitated most of them, and improvement throughout the years were noticeable from the growing rate of participation from the government. In the first two years of the field trip, 2017 and 2018, the government were only attending as a presenter, invited by the committee to give a presentation to the field trip participants without any further participation. However, in the third year, the final presentation was hosted in the city hall. YCDC had granted permission to use their offices for delivering the initial results and progress of the field trip participants. It was a sign that the presence of WfW's projects and partners has improved enough in the eyes of the governments.



Fig 39. Community members having the stage at the National Workshop 'Housing [for/by] people'. -Women for the World

being the issues of informal settlements. It became an organisation nurtured by WfW and has been working in tandem with them in various projects. The collaboration was not only limited in a housing project but also several other workshops.

The implementations of WfW' and WSDN' housing projects spread through the local and international media, it made two of the microfinance institution reaching out to WfW in 2017. One of them being the KEB Hana Microfinance (KHMF). It is the subsidiary company of Hana Financial Group, one of the largest bank holding companies in South Korea. Founded in August 2013, KHMF is one of the largest microfinance institutes in Myanmar, providing affordable loans to support the financial needs of those who wish to start or to expand their business. KHMF has branches in 12 States and Divisions in Myanmar. The programme with WfW serves as an alternative scheme even for the company. As the loans to WSDN, which were unregistered formally for some sorts, were not in their regular loan scheme. WSDN reports and capabilities proof such as long records of weekly savings and loans, the rigid but yet flexible scheme of the groups, significant numbers of members, which came from the facilitated effort from WfW acts as collateral for KHMF. It made them agreed to collaborate in the development of the community

building in the Taw Win Housing Projects; it became the first time where the housing projects got a source of funds from a formal financial provider institution. Having trust from such formal company will attempt to gain the trust of the government better. However, the improved relationship and recognition do not come without a challenge. One of them was when the cooperation agreement did not end well for WfW and its partners in the Yoma Housing Projects, which requires WfW to withdraw from the project.

A seminar about informal settlements in Myanmar was organised by the architectural department of YTU in 2018, one of the central committees in the previously mentioned field trip. The seminar was collecting research papers and invited local and international NGOs and University. The gathered knowledge was collected and discussed in the same room. It was unfortunate as there is no direct involvement with WfW as one of the main actors in the development of the informal settlements, which hinder the possibilities of further networking of knowledge gathering. However, a decade of approach does become fruitful. In May 2019, a national workshop titled 'Housing [for/by] people' were being held. It was attended by the international communities, academics, and various stakeholders from WfW' networks. In this workshop, aside from the annual practice of knowledge sharing between fellow communities on the topics of community-led empowerments, an MoU signing between WfW, ACHR, and DUHD were also took place. It becomes a massive milestone of WfW journey in building the recognition of the people.

WfW's performance dimensions

Example of the network that has been developed by WfW through the WSDN could be categorised as a self-help saving groups. The effect of such groups could be found across literature, micro-credit scheme is regarded as a catalyst in low-income households who have minimum access to resources (Steele et al., 2001); a multidimensional process to enable people (Murthy, 2013); and as a way out of poverty (ACHR, 2013). With that as a goal, the idea to expand the scale of networks is not just about numbers, but also a way to slowly improve the living conditions of the low-income household.

To move in that direction is not without careful consideration, and WfW, an organisation that facilitates the WSDN members and other low-income households in the realm of planning, were pushing the scales further. Safier (2002), described that there are four corresponding areas of proactive possibilities for planners and planning agencies:

1. Improving technical capabilities, innovation skills, and individual or group behaviour. It has been done through various capacity building, workshops, and training with the community;
2. Extending institutional and inter-organisational reforms – of goals, roles, priorities, procedures, and allocation of resources. WfW is doing many collaborative projects. Including the DPU UCL annual field trip;
3. Expanding social interaction and mobilisation – involvement in modes of inclusive, participative, and collaborative bargaining and negotiation, was embodied in every WfW and WSDN practice;
4. Enlarging the scope of strategic analysis and tactical response to the dynamics of urban development. The last points of it are what WfW accumulated and gathered from the first three points, one of the examples being the ideas of nurturing Myanmar's land issues which are going to be explored in the next chapter.

Herbert (cited in Safier, 2002, p. 129) mention, in a situation where room for manoeuvre of planning seems non-existent, several important notions from four different dimensions are needed, as being elaborated on the following table:

Table 9. Inter-dimensional survey of potential initiatives in a given action space

1	Technical and behavioural dimension	1.a	Innovation with clarity in technicality, more efficient use of resources, and detailed operational procedure;
		1.b	The capabilities to handle hot issues within boundary to flexibly response the perceived unwinnable confrontations;
		1.c	The capabilities to handle hot issues within boundary to flexibly response the perceived unwinnable confrontations;
2	Institutional and inter-organisational dimension	2.a	Political responsiveness, and the holistic and inclusive involvement of policy, planning, management and service-providing agencies;
		2.b	Providing sufficient time for dialogue on major issues;
		2.c	Realisation of administrative and management capacities, and the existing possibilities for a new institution-building.
3	Social relations dimension	3.a	The need to engage the community;
		3.b	Respecting local initiative;
		3.c	Incorporating participation especially at those commonly excluded.
4	Strategic issues dimension	4.a	Realistic appreciation of the local context in terms of overall availability of resources;
		4.b	Manoeuvrability of limited available resources away from those who are embedded in dominant positions of power.

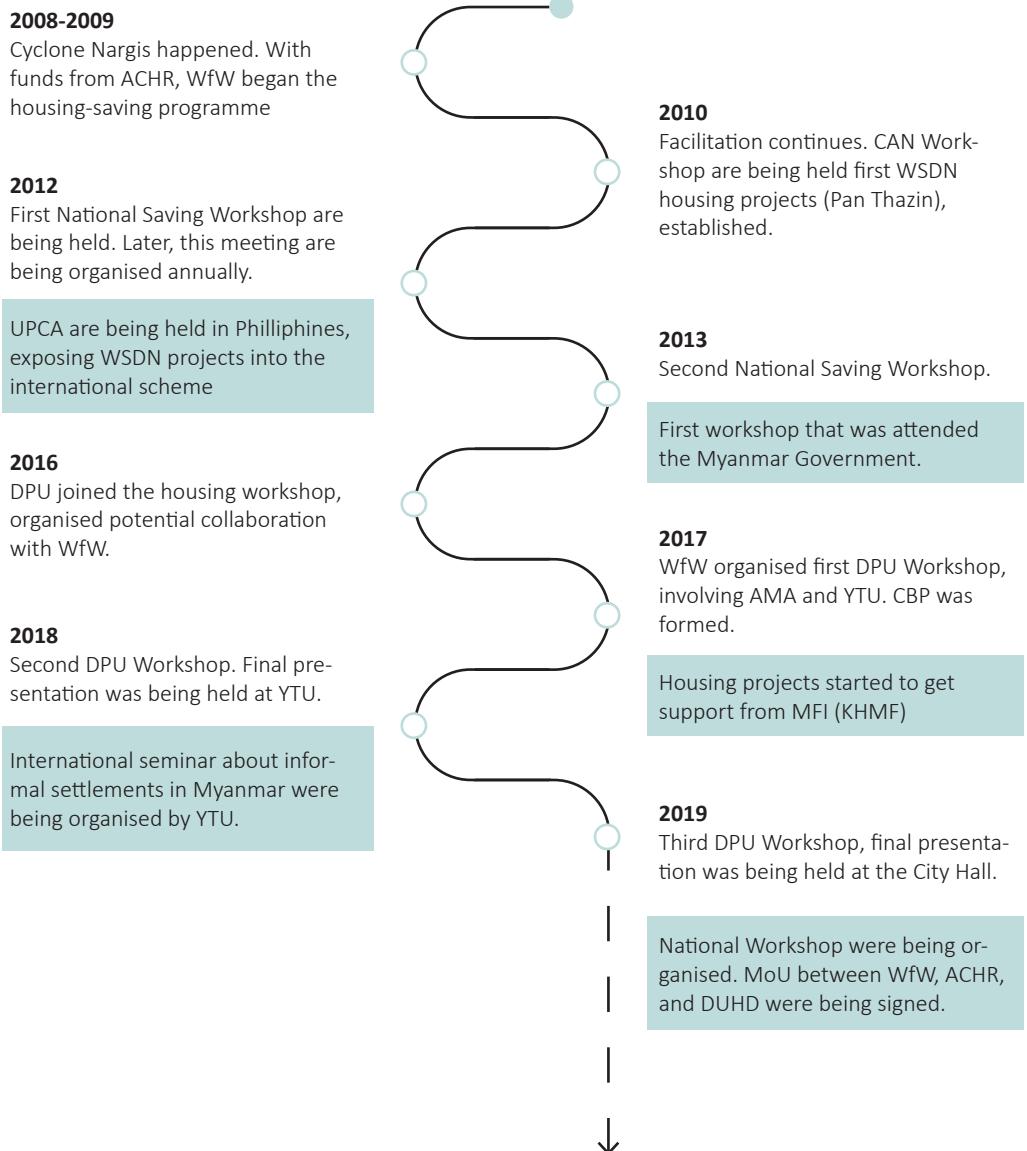


Fig 40. Timeline of the trajectory of WfW, including major milestones.

WfW was clear in incorporating the dimensions of the social relations in their programme. As an operator in leading the self-help group for low-income households, it became a crucial focus to have a method in engaging, respecting, and enabling the participation and local initiatives. So do the technical and behavioural dimension. The flexibility and innovation were needed in a line of work with multiple layers of interest and considerable gaps in power dynamics between each party. Point 1.c especially was evident in the way of persistent attempt from WfW to approach the government. The institutional and inter-organisational dimension was being explored in the previous part of this chapter. Strategic issues dimension was how the other dimension could be put into something tangible. Not only about housing, but also about how a system could be implemented into place.

Final thought towards the future of WfW's dynamics

The political dynamics and the natural disaster in Myanmar, which caused the displacement of people, remains a problem to be solved. The programme employed by WfW could be perceived as one of the attempts to stitch those opportunities. It began as a small initiative which grows into another level of scale. The limited, sporadic numbers on the ground to maintain the close-knit network by themselves is deemed crucial to secure a way of working, in order to keep the process going as initially intended. It is not just a matter of a growing number of members, but also how each knowledge could be passed clearly to the next set of members, an essence which made the organisation stronger inside. These growing connections, strategic partnership, and series of fellow organisations and institution do have an impact, immensely, on WfW projects. It adds into building social security, not only to the community in WSDN, but also the general neighbourhood around it. Though they have strong social security, through housing and saving groups community, every one of them is still living without legal tenure security; this issue will be addressed in the following chapter. In the middle of its practice for more than a decade, what the future brings were still yet to come. Nevertheless, with recent developments which have been going one for a decade, WfW and the communities are steadily moving into a more significant scene.



Exploring alternative trajectories:

Towards collective land ownership for community-led housing

by *Marina Kolovou Kouri*

The establishment of these partnerships and networks has been guided by one of the organisation's core missions: to support low-income communities in obtaining secure and affordable land and housing. This section elaborates on the main challenges faced both by the organisation and the communities in accessing land for community-led housing, and the implications of said challenges on the dwellers' security of tenure –in legal terms, as in perceived ones. An additional layer of WfW's mandate, namely the enablement and empowerment of women, is highlighted in the context of this community-based practice. With a focus on strengthening their model and scaling up their impact, WfW has been more recently exploring new pathways to securing land and integrating grassroots innovations in community-led housing.

Unpacking tenure (in)security for urban poor dwellers in Yangon

The complexity of tenure security in Myanmar is a product of its “multiple regimes of property and myriad laws that govern land” (UN-Habitat, 2017a, p. 4). Historically, people in Myanmar have owned land without any formal documentation, but on the basis of customary and informal agreements (LIOH, 2015). However, the implementation of statutory laws that clash with customary practices has impacted large numbers of people and created obstacles to their security of tenure. While tenure rights in Myanmar are

Fig 41. (facing page)
*Women from the Saving
and Development Network
review and mark the
boundaries of a new land
plot.*

mostly discussed within rural settings⁶, a comparison between rural and urban contexts reveals that insecurity is most prominent in cities (Dept. Of Population, 2015, p. 230).

Tenure security emerges as one of the main challenges for Yangon's informal residents. Indeed, Forbes' research concludes that tenure security is "the highest aspiration" (2016, p. 235) for most urban poor dwellers. It shall be noted that security has different gradients –systems of tenure can vary "even within a single settlement" (UN-Habitat, 2017a, p. 26). For example,

Table 10. Basis of right to the land that was confiscated (for Yangon Region)⁷						
	Inherited customary right	Right based on usage/ occupation	Land right purchased	Land right leased	Other	No response
Yangon	66,70%	15,7%	11,1%	0%	3,7%	2,8%

Table 11. Type of Ownership of Housing Unit/ Tenure (%)							
	Total number of households	Owner	Renter	Provided free	Govt. Quarters	Private Company Quarters	Other
UNION	10,877,832	85,5	7,4	2,5	3,3	0,7	0,6
Urban	3,049,433	66,0	20,3	4,4	7,0	1,0	1,3
Rural	7,828,399	93,1	2,4	1,8	1,8	0,6	0,3
YANGON	1,582,944	64,5	24,5	3,4	4,9	1,3	1,4
Urban	1,069,056	56,7	30,7	4,0	5,6	1,3	1,7
Rural	513,888	80,6	11,6	2,2	3,4	1,2	1,0

6 See for example: Srinivas, S. and Saw Hlaing, U. (2015). Myanmar: Land tenure issues and the impact of rural development. Roma: Food And Agriculture Organisation (FAO); Mark S. (2016). Are the Odds of Justice "Stacked" Against Them? Challenges and Opportunities for Securing Land Claims by Smallholder Farmers in Myanmar. Critical Asian Studies, 48(3), pp. 443-460; Boutry, M., Allaverdian, C., Mellac, M., Huard, S., San Thein, Tin Myo Win, Khin Pyae Sone. (2017). Land tenure in rural lowland Myanmar: From historical perspectives to contemporary realities in the Dry zone and the Delta. Of lives of land Myanmar research series. Yangon: GRET.

7 This research was carried out by network members of Land in Our Hands (involving 16 organisations and farmers rights activists) in six states (Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon, Chin, northern and southern Shan) and seven regions (Yangon, Bago, Ayeyarwaddy, Mandalay, Sagaing, Magway and Thaninthayi) in Myanmar. Although the survey sample for Yangon has been comparatively small (108 subjects out of a total of 2,662 respondents), the results follow a similar pattern to the overall statistics, according to which 57,4% of the total respondents base their right to confiscated land on customary law, and another 30,3% based it on long-term occupation-use.

Land dynamics in peri-urban Yangon

In simple terms, land in Myanmar is classified either as agricultural –used for cultivation purposes and generally not permitting the construction of buildings– and as non-agricultural. The Land Nationalisation Act from 1953 inscribed the transfer of all agricultural land to the ownership of the state, casting farmers across the country merely as tenants of their lands, having to adhere to certain conditions that the state imposed (Leckie & Simperingham, 2009). Under this law, transactions of farmland were deemed illegal, however this did not stop them from happening through a combination of formal and informal arrangements (Boutry et al., 2016).

The more recent Farmland Law of 2012, which allowed farmers to transfer land use rights, essentially “legitimised an already existing system” (Boutry et al., 2016, p. 24). This legal change, however, was interpreted by many as the right to sell and purchase freely –something that first, is not the case, and secondly, spiked the transactions of farmland and land speculation quite rapidly. This has been compounded by economic and political reforms that encourage direct foreign investment, as well as by the masterplan for Greater Yangon, which foresees the integration of further –now rural– areas into the municipality, and has fuelled speculation where development is anticipated (Boutry, 2018).

The remoteness and precariousness of peripheral lands, as well as their proximity to factories in industrial zones, have been attracting large masses of migrants –from within or outside Yangon. Interestingly, while land speculation had been restricted mostly to certain elites –usually with ties to the military– the dynamics that emerged in the recent years have opened up the peri-urban land market to different actors, “from factory owners [...] to villagers themselves” (Boutry et al., 2016, p. 25). Farmers started selling land to brokers, who would either pool land plots together to resell them to investors, or subdivide plots and sell them to individual families for housing (Boutry et al., 2016). Contrary to their assumptions, dwellers that have purchased land (rights) directly from farmers or brokers are still squatters as far as the state is concerned. Their shared intention is to convert the agricultural lands to other uses, mostly housing. After all, most

of the wards built since the 1990s were initially informal areas that eventually became formalised after investment in basic infrastructures and the expansion of new factories (Boutry, 2018). However, depending on the land type (paddy land, horticultural land, village land, fish pond) the process can be anywhere from difficult to inaccessible. Against all difficulties, this is the main mode of operation in the peripheral areas of Yangon, where most of the expansion of settlements takes place on agricultural lands.





Fig 42. A house being demolished by YCDC field staff in the course of the 2017 eviction in Hlegu township. -Reuters

many of the people that had been resettled in the course of the large-scale evictions were issued long-term lease certificates, securing them the right to possess land. On the other hand, the majority of more recent informal dwellers has no formally recognised documentation of tenure –in particular dwellers of river-side and road-side settlements (UN-Habitat, 2017a). In practice, however, their security may still vary a lot, depending on factors ranging from the ownership and status of land, to personal networks with powerful landlords, and ties to the ward or township administration (Forbes, 2016). What is more, the longevity of a settlement can at times give residents a sense of security –even without formal titles– and some level of *regularisation* may come into effect through permissions to connect to infrastructure networks, the construction of roads, or the distribution of housing registration certificates (UN-Habitat, 2017a).

Despite the widely acknowledged negative implications of this insecurity on dwellers, the state-led approaches to address this are very limited, and judicial measures by which people can defend themselves are virtually non-existent (Displacement Solutions, 2015). Kyed (2019) cites three grounds on which providing/formalising land tenure has not been pursued by governments. First, there is a widespread belief that the provision of

Fig 43. (facing page) Landfill in the outskirts of the city, in close proximity to several urban poor households.

tenure security to informal dwellers would result “in a massive new influx of migrants to the city” (*ibid.*, p. 72), as more people will want to benefit from the accommodating measures. Secondly, many government officials seem to assume that the formalisation of informal settlements will result to beneficiaries selling their allocated lands to other informal dwellers, and squatting elsewhere –what is informally known as *professional squatting* (*ibid.*). Furthermore, it can be argued that informal dwellers are generally perceived as “undesirable” and “obstacles to urban development and security” (Kyed, 2019, p. 66) –leading to general feelings of resentment against them. As long as these views persist, achieving genuine tenure security for informal dwellers seems strenuous.

As referred to earlier, evictions still occur today and informal dwellers are very aware of their level of exposure to eviction as “an everyday reality [...], not just a theoretical possibility” (Forbes, 2016, p. 210). As a result of that, investing in upgrading their houses and communities is an unlikely priority for poor households that usually concentrate their efforts and resources on obtaining titles only when eviction becomes an imminent threat (Forbes, 2016). Forbes (2019) elaborates that the fear of eviction can also create disputes within communities, as long-term squatters may claim to have more rights over more recent settlers. Much worse, when an eviction indeed occurs, people suffer a great loss of both economic and social capital, including significant personal and communal networks and access to their sources of employment. As people might get evicted multiple times –in the absence of a consistent resettlement plan– it becomes evident that the pressures placed on them grow with every relocation. This high (forced) mobility and tenure insecurity shape the ground for crime, social divisions and lack of social cohesion (Kyed, 2019), that ultimately inhibit the self-organisation of communities towards the substitution of services and infrastructures that the city does not provide them with (*ibid.*, p. 67). Without security of tenure, people risk staying trapped in an endless cycle of exploitation and poverty, as tenure is often the backbone to upgrading, organising, making claims, and eventually achieving recognition.

Tenure security from a gender perspective

“[M]ost of us are homeless –we are either squatters on someone else’s land or we have to rent rooms, so our first priority is getting secure land and housing”. WSG member (ACHR, 2013, p. 15)

Addressing the need for secure land and housing has been a priority for WfW since the beginning of their operation in informal settlements. This is



Fig 44. Meeting of WSG members in Shwepyithar. The men –husbands, brothers, sons or otherwise– stay outside of the hall.

targeted at two fronts; through the direct implementation of housing projects for urban poor households, and through advocacy and the establishment of strategic partnerships in order to influence policy development and challenge mainstream (negative) perceptions of informality. With an approach that puts the community at the centre of this process, WfW has been supporting and facilitating people's efforts through practices of mobilisation and collective saving. Women that had experienced evictions or would live under the threat of it; women that would live in inner-city areas but were gradually priced out as rent prices kept rising; women that had not owned a house mobilised to overcome their shared obstacles.

Against the backdrop of widespread tenure insecurity, women in Myanmar are more likely to be disadvantaged when it comes to their access to land (Pierce & Nant Thi Thi Oo, 2016; Barron et al., 2017). While the National Land Use Policy of 2016 inscribes that men and women enjoy the same rights regarding land tenure and management, the factual access of women to land may be constrained in many cases. A report published by the NGO Namati (Pierce & Nant Thi Thi Oo, 2016) cites several grounds on which this occurs. First, the decision-making apparatuses –at intra-household, community, and government level– are overwhelmingly male-dominated,



Fig 45. Women's Saving Groups members on the field.

making it unlikely that female interests are represented adequately (*ibid.*). Adding to that, patrilineal inheritance practices followed by certain ethnic groups mean that women either do not own land at all, or are susceptible to losing their property to male family members (*ibid.*). As a result of a long-standing patriarchal system, there is a significant discrepancy with respect to the possession of relevant documentation between women and men. The lack of land possession documents translates for many women into more vulnerability to land grabs or land disputes and not receiving compensation, impacting by extent their livelihood and safety (*ibid.*).

In such a context, a model that views women as key stakeholders in the process of establishing safe and improved communities is setting a precedent for more equitable practices. Women are positioned at the centre of this development process, deciding together, managing conflicts, scouting for land, engaging in and negotiating the allocation of plots. The culmination of this process is the possession of a contract affirming their *collective ownership* of land and including all their names. A WSG member from the community of Pan Thazin recalls a Burmese proverb that roughly translates: “The day will not break for a hen’s cackle; it will break only for a rooster’s crow”. Loaded with patriarchal stereotypes, this saying is reflective of the

status that women broadly have in the Myanmar culture: change is brought by men; women cannot effect change. But then the woman exclaims: “Now look at what the hen are achieving!” The WSG members associate a number of benefits to the collective ownership of land; highlighting especially their feeling of security and safety, that people watch out for each other, that the community “feels like family” and they can “leave the door unlocked even when they leave the house” thanks to the trust they have built with each other. When asked about how she feels *as a woman* to be the head of her household and the owner of a house, another WSG member responded: “kind of proud”.

The status of land and tenure security in community-led housing

The process of community-led housing starts with the formation of savings groups consisting of up to 30 people, and the inauguration of a period of saving that usually ranges between one and two years. In the meantime, as the search for land can last for months, the savings groups members start scouting for plots that suit their needs –with affordability being the most critical factor. WfW director Van Lizar recalls that people were not too enthusiastic about *sharing* a plot of land in the beginning. But that was only until a sense of community emerged and trust was built among the WSG members. In the very first project of WfW, initiated in 2009 in Hlaingtharyar township, women had been initially looking for government-owned land to purchase, however their search was proving unsuccessful and they bought an agricultural plot instead. The housing projects that followed since then have also been implemented on agricultural land. These land plots can be mostly encountered in peri-urban areas; usually former paddy fields with no infrastructure present. The land is then owned collectively by the participating savings groups members, as is stated in the ownership certificate that includes their names. Once land has been purchased, the women, with the assistance of WfW and some local volunteers, divide the land in individual plots, negotiate their priorities and needs, confirm their housing designs and commence with the construction of their settlement –including basic infrastructure and the houses themselves.

This model has been replicated successfully since, and WfW count 11 housing projects in Yangon to date. However, both WfW and the communities, accept a significant gap in this process: the formal recognition of the purchase of the land. The main issue has been –as explained in the previous section– that the transactions of agricultural land are not permitted, and by extent, any built constructions on them are deemed informal and subject to removal. Although there is in theory a procedure by which land can be converted from





Fig 47. Incremental upgrading of housing units in Pan Thazin and La Min Eain settlements.

agricultural to residential, the process is very complex and lengthy, making the change virtually impossible for economically poor dwellers. As such, the members of the housing projects have not been in reality entirely secure from the possibility of eviction. Given the difficulty –if not impossibility– of purchasing land that is already classified as residential, the dwellers take into account that there are certain points of vulnerability in their ability to stay. Another challenge for the WfW model has been the absence of a legal framework that recognises collective ownership of land. Although it is not explicitly prohibited, there is simply no structure or system that foresees this option. These two issues have put the tenure within WfW housing projects into a legal grey zone to varying extents.

Despite that, it shall be noted that none of the housing projects has received any eviction notices to date. So, while *de jure* security of tenure is not guaranteed, in reality the settlements have not been threatened –with the oldest among them counting over a decade of existence. The assumption of WfW is that the reason for this *de facto security* is twofold. First, the residents of more established and consolidated settlements have a much higher capacity to organise and defend themselves against evictions by negotiating with local authorities and claiming their right to stay. Secondly,

Fig 46. (facing page) View of the same house in the settlement of Pan Thazin in May 2019 (top), and after upgrading works, in October 2019 (bottom).

the large-scale informality in combination with poor record-keeping makes for a cloudy landscape, giving the dwellers the benefit of *untraceability* –at least until a moment of rupture. One WSG member adds to the reasoning behind their security that, since WfW has started building relations with government departments and the Chief Minister of YRG, their settlement has enjoyed more recognition from local authorities. Furthermore, this could be also due to the fact that the acquired lands are located mostly in very peripheral –and by extent less wanted– areas, where no claims have been made by the authorities or other parties.

This (temporary?) security has a significant positive impact on the perception of the housing projects' members. Their feelings of security are demonstrated to varying degrees, according to the longevity of their settlement, through explicit and implicit means. Many dwellers have expressed confidence in their entitlement to the land and their communities, and do not perceive any threat to their security –even though they are aware that the legal recognition is still pending. As such, the residents of older and more consolidated settlements have commenced processes of upgrading, whether this involves individual houses or interventions at community level. In one of the earliest housing projects, Pan Thazin, some of the families have started replacing the original structures of their houses with more permanent and resistant materials: in place of bamboo and timber come concrete and plaster walls. Also, within this process of upgrading, some residents started expanding their houses vertically, adding a second floor to enjoy a more comfortable living situation or accommodate new family members. These developments at household level began only in the last couple of years, and it is very probable that more of the original structures will soon be replaced, as more and more dwellers plan to upgrade in the next years. In the communal spaces this permanence can be seen in the incrementally improving infrastructure –like the addition of new water tanks, the improvement of the drainage– the cultivation of small gardens, and the progressive development of the community centres.

These observations reaffirm the discrepancies between *de jure* and *de facto* tenure security: While not formally recognised yet, the residents of WfW housing projects have not been moved or threatened to be moved, and enjoy an increased feeling of security that is positively reflected in their houses and communities. At the same time though, the fact that there is no guarantee that this equilibrium will not be threatened in the future brings us back to the argument that tenure insecurity is one of the main obstacles to development and growth for the urban poor communities.



Fig 48. WfW Director Van Lizar Aung at an orientation meeting with authorities in Hlaingtharyar - Women for the World

New trajectories for community-led housing

When talking about the future of housing for the urban poor, WfW places their efforts and hopes towards the idea of collectively-owned land. There are mainly two trajectories that the organisation is trying to pursue through further advocacy and strategic partnerships. First, they aim to influence policy development and specifically the creation of a framework that recognises the collective ownership of land by communities. Preliminary discussions with government departments include the incorporation of a new land type under the name of *community common land*. This would enable the retroactive formalisation and recognition of existing WfW housing projects, as well as lay the groundwork for future projects to be implemented in a genuinely secure way. Secondly, WfW has been advocating for the allocation of government-owned lands to implement community-led housing following the same model of collective saving and self-construction. Even though these schemes are at an early stage, the very conversation of such possibilities is illustrative of the shifts in the landscape of land acquisition and housing provision for the urban poor in Yangon. The progressive recognition of people-centred practices is a step towards a more socially equitable city – and a positive outcome of the democratic transition of the country.

The recognition of WfW housing projects would bridge a significant gap in the practice of community-led housing, namely that of secure collective land tenure. As elaborated previously, the status of land has been the Achilles' heel of the WfW housing model, since all purchased land plots have been agricultural land, and as such lacked formal recognition of tenure. Thus, offering genuine tenure security to people that have been traditionally excluded from formal systems and have in many cases been faced with or threatened by evictions is an important milestone in the struggle for housing and land rights. This security can bring about the conditions for people to further upgrade their houses and communities, improve their access to formal employment, education and healthcare, and take steps towards more stable livelihoods. Similarly, in view of the general scarcity of properly urbanised land, the increasing land speculation, and the continuous growth of the city, the allocation of lands by the government towards the support of urban poor communities would set a significant precedent in the context of the city's approaches to housing and urban development.

When (if?) these models materialise and, most importantly, prove successful to the numerous stakeholders involved –including the communities themselves, the different state departments, and WfW– the road could be paved for an institutionalisation of the WfW community development model, possibly forming part of the state's approach to affordable housing. At the moment, there are many uncertainties about who would be the implementing actors, what would be the scope of the frameworks, and when they would be delivered. What is certain though, is that testing innovations like this can be very meaningful to derive learnings for the implementation of similar projects in the future, both on the practitioners' side, and on the policy-makers' and government's side. For example, these developments could open the door to more alternatives, like on-site upgrading and land-sharing –both practices that WfW intends to explore for the future of community-led housing in Yangon. The way these processes will be structured matters, and schemes that put the communities at the centre allow dwellers to have greater control of their living conditions. For that to happen, WfW is continuously and tirelessly engaged in the dissemination of the realities of the urban poor and strive for the acceptance of community-based practices. After all, genuine solutions to the housing problem of informal dwellers will arise “only after squatting is understood as a respectable choice for many poor people” (Forbes, 2019, p. 113).

The role of WfW in scaling up community-led practices in Yangon

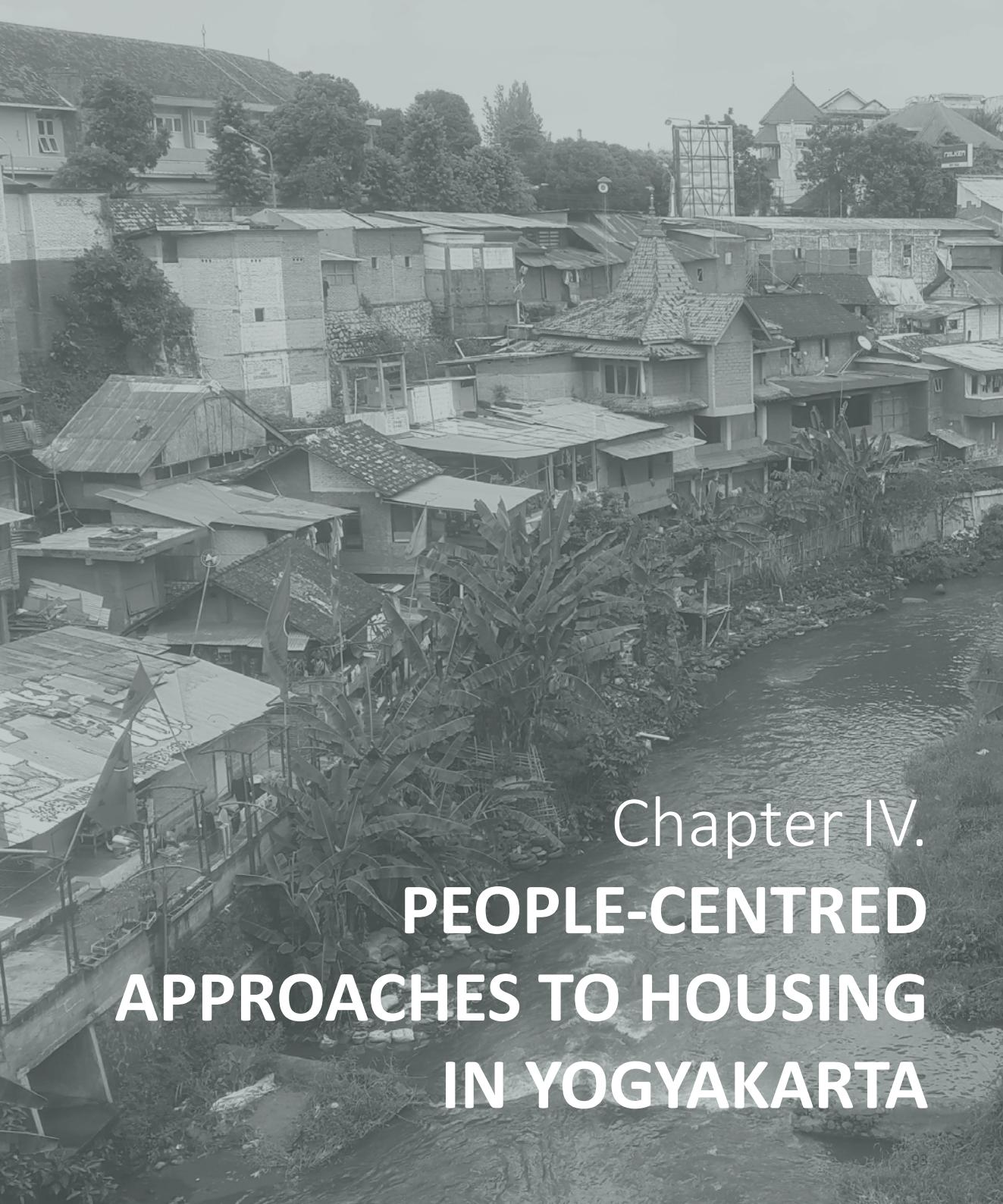
Grounded in the belief that people should be at the centre of their development process, WfW has been assuming the role of the mobiliser, trainer, advocate and mediator –supporting and cultivating connections among communities, and between communities and authorities. At the core of their activities is the organisation of women into savings groups –not only a means to fulfil the material needs for shelter, but also an effective tool for building strong, self-reliant, and accountable communities.

The WSDN has by now grown its own roots, fostering the exchange of knowledge and experiences across sectors and scales, and integrating more and more communities to their network. Increasing the exposure of the organisation’s work, the capabilities encountered across communities, and the feasibility of a people-centred model for housing has enabled the formation of further strategic alliances with authorities, professionals and actors of urban transformation. Next to that, capacity building in mapping, surveying and the use of technology serves to collect data that help to disseminate the realities and needs of the urban poor, as well as link them to relevant stakeholders. With both, the strengthening of communities, the establishment of meaningful partnerships, and continuous advocacy, WfW has been progressively increasing the leverage capacity of the organisation and of the WSGs.

The housing projects that have emerged through the mobilisation of communities and the activity of collective saving can be viewed as the physical argument that the urban poor have the capacity, the skills, the innovation and energy to effect positive changes, against common assumptions of them as *helpless or recipients of aid*. Within a particularly unfavourable context of national land management and limited housing delivery mechanisms, WfW has been attempting to demonstrate what is possible. Although the housing projects still lack formal recognition for the reasons outlined previously, their residents experience a considerable improvement in their tenure security; after all, tenure security can –and shall– be conceptualised as a spectrum. Therein, an approach that views the urban poor as the main visionaries and implementers of their housing and communities creates a strong sense of ownership in each of the projects. This is further strengthened by the aspect

of *collectiveness*, as the dwellers within one housing project, but also within the broader network, acknowledge that they have a strong support system to fall back to.

The realisation that a selective focus on housing *projects* may to some degree disregard their connection to the rest of the city has led the organisation to reach out to several partners and explore possibilities for more integrated approaches. Addressing the issue of land acquisition for community-led housing is one of the key elements in the organisation's current strategic approach, including the search for alternative tenure schemes, the exploration of avenues towards collective land ownership, and building incremental alliances with local authorities. Capitalising on their large and well-connected network of savings groups, the convincing model of self-help housing, on several years of advocacy, and capturing opportunities, WfW pushes for the adoption of policies and frameworks that will have a long-term positive impact for housing the urban poor.



Chapter IV. **PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACHES TO HOUSING IN YOGYAKARTA**



Bridging scales:

Collectively promoting tenure security in Yogyakarta's urban kampung

by Katrin Hofer

As outlined above, the tenure system in Yogyakarta is multi-faceted. The overlay of customary and statutory tenure systems has created a complex matrix of how land and housing is accessed and occupied. In their attempt to shift to more sustainable and inclusive urban practices, Arkom works with communities to unpack the experienced realities of tenure (in)security in Yogyakarta. This section looks at Arkom's approach to establishing a common understanding of tenure security and to implementing strategies collaboratively. It begins with an overview of the different definitions of and approaches to tenure security in the given context. The section then turns its focus to how Arkom is working towards improved tenure security for kampung dwellers by bridging scales. This is done through three approaches: (1) a bottom-up approach to unpacking tenure security; (2) the creation of small-scale pilot models; and (3) advocacy and building partnerships. The section concludes by highlighting the potential of these approaches and by reflecting on remaining challenges.

Definitions of and approaches to tenure security

UN-Habitat defines tenure security as “the right of all individuals and groups to effective protection by the state against forced evictions” (Benschop, 2003, p. 2). It is thus a right granted by the state aiming at fostering a sense of security that in return creates an environment in which people

Fig 49. (facing page) A typical riverbank settlement in Yogyakarta.

are willing to invest to improve and sustain their quality of life (UN-Habitat, 2004). As Raharjo (2010, p. 3) points out, "this definition suggests that the state is the primary agency responsible for providing access to tenure security. One may assume that such access means the provision of legalised tenure". The Indonesian government defines tenure security in line with this interpretation and emphasises its legal aspects. The state's understanding is thus linked to the specific land rights outlined in the BAL and neglects traditional and more flexible tenure forms (Kementerian PPN/ Bappenas, 2015). Nevertheless, many households in kampung have been living in their houses for years, sometimes generations and "the continuing existence of informal settlements indicates that these settlements have achieved a certain extent of non-legalised tenure" (Raharjo, 2010, p. 3) that could be upheld over time.

Generally, the literature points to two disconnects regarding the conceptualisation of tenure security by the government and the realities of kampung dwellers:

1. Legal-illegal-dichotomy vs. tenure security as a continuum

Whereas the state sees tenure security only linked to formal land and housing rights, reality in the kampung is more complex, creating spaces between legality and illegality. Daryono (2010) thus suggests that tenure security in Indonesia should much rather be understood as a continuum, as tenure scenarios cover forms that are considered to be formal (in line with statutory land rights), semi-formal (customary land rights that have not been registered as rights acknowledged by the BAL yet) or informal (unconverted land rights and illegal land occupations) (*ibid.*). Moreover, Raharjo (2010) points out that while the formal system provides recognition of tenure rights through certification, urban poor use other means to strengthen their legitimacy to live in their settlements. It can be "expressed through the production of built forms, from the staking out of territorial markers to the construction of the whole built environment" (*ibid.*, p. 3). Their understanding of security of tenure is thus much more shaped by their *de facto* tenure security and their perceived legitimacy of tenure.

2. Tenure security at household level vs. security at settlement level

A common difficulty is furthermore the competing interest of the statutory right, which puts its focus on individual ownership rights and the commodification of land, and the customary land system, which emphasises communal forms and the social function of land (Daryono, 2010).



Fig 50. (left) Community mapping activity. - Arkom (right) Workshop to practice the questionnaire for community-led research.

Such disconnects contribute to tenure security remaining an abstract element, constituted by various components and realities. Whereas the state's definition acknowledges tenure security as the right over property at an individual level, communities have a more holistic understanding and link the concept to the security of a settlement rather than to the protection from eviction of one single household. The different understandings do not only lead to misunderstandings about the intention of programmes, but also render implementation of programmes inadequate to people's realities.

Within this context, Arkom works towards creating a more holistic understanding of tenure security and invites kampung communities to collaboratively address ensuing challenges. The goal lies in awareness raising about the concept and consequences of tenure (in)security in Yogyakarta Province, in the development of collaborative pilot projects and in bringing about change at the provincial level, by introducing policies that define informal settlements as one of the strategic areas for planning. Arkom follows what they call a collaborative action approach and build on strategies linked to community organising, networking and advocacy.

Approach 1: A bottom-up approach to unpacking tenure security

A first strategy to achieve more tenure security for residents of informal settlements in Yogyakarta is through empowering communities to be engaged in research. Having more (relevant) data is crucial in the given context, as the government only gathers data related to the recorded land titles and thus does not have data on people's tenure realities in the kampung. Community-led research on tenure security contributes to achieve four goals:

1. Creating a realistic image of people's realities of living in kampung in Yogyakarta. This not only involves a community-based definition of *tenure security*, but also the creation of settlement profiles.
2. Finding patterns in the diverse experiences to help identify settlements types.
3. Community mobilising and strengthening communities' awareness of tenure (in)security. This will lead to improved bargaining power for kampung communities.
4. Using the knowledge base for a strategic move to help support Arkom's government engagement and the development of programmes that are more sensitive to people's lived experiences. It should enable contextualised solutions rather than one-solution-fits-all.

In the first phase of the research, Arkom together with Kalijawi (see box) organised a series of workshops, in which communities identified criteria that constitute tenure security for them. They then cross-referenced those with the existing indicators of tenure security and adequate housing defined by UN-Habitat and the Indonesian government. Building on these findings, the communities came up with a list of seven criteria for tenure security. With the help of Gadjah Mada University, these indicators have been further adjusted and strengthened. The criteria defined by the communities are the following: *housing, land rights, social and institutional networks, access to services, condition of the settlement and environment, infrastructure and location*. The selection of these criteria shows that tenure security for the communities is about more than just land titles –it encompasses other factors that constitute a good living quality in the settlement and is thus not only linked to the status of one single household, but the settlement as a whole.

In a next step, the criteria developed by the communities formed the basis for the development of a research tool. This was again done in a participatory manner and eventually a mixed-methods approach was agreed upon, which includes standardised group interviews, community-mapping

Fig 51. (facing page) Kalijawi members singing their anthem Harmony Kalijawi.

Kalijawi

Kalijawi is a network of mainly women living in informal riverbank settlements along the Gajah Wong and Winongo rivers in Yogyakarta. It was formed in 2012. The name Kalijawi comes from *kali*, which means river in Javanese, *ja* referring to Gajah Wong and *wi* referring to Winongo. The network consists of 300 members from 13 kampung in Yogyakarta City and Sleman and Bantul regencies. Its members mostly come from low-income households and their settlements are characterised by a lack of adequate housing, infrastructure and basic services. Kalijawi members often experience weak tenure security.

The main goal of Kalijawi is to improve their living conditions, to fight for recognition and to challenge their marginalised position through collective action. The organisational structure of the network is horizontal, and decisions are made collectively at the kampung level. With the help of Arkom, Kalijawi has set up savings groups and a community development fund to generate their own financial resources.



exercises photo documentation and transect walks. In additional workshops, community members learnt about the tool and how it would be used. This process not only raised awareness about the issue of tenure security among the participants but was also a means to mobilise communities. Such capacity building for communities is a key element in Arkom's approach.

At the time of writing, the data collection for the settlement profiling was still ongoing. However, the box below illustrates some findings by exploring the complex realities of kampung. In a next step, Arkom together with the communities plans to analyse the data by looking for patterns across the different settlements. Through examining the challenges and potentials of the settlements, Arkom hopes to be able to create a typology of settlements. Contrasting this information with existing government policies and approaches is envisaged to highlight existing gaps and can thus help in the search for more context-sensitive programmes to address kampung dwellers' precarity.

Approach 2: Creating small-scale pilot models

Alongside community-led research, Arkom is invested in creating small-scale pilot projects. They work with communities to think about ways to improve their security of tenure in the short and long term. The goal of this approach is to mainstream implementation through the replication of successful cases.

Pringgomukti community⁸

The Pringgomukti community is formed of 38 members, which have been evicted from an inner-city neighbourhood in Pringgokusuman due to the development of a hotel in 2013. The families lived in their houses since the 1930's and held Ngindung agreements. After hearing about the planned hotel development, the affected households joined forces and formed Pringgomukti to collectively find solutions for after the eviction. As the households all received small compensations from the landowner, the community decided to pool these funds to collectively buy land. They identified a plot of land (ca. 2,100 m²) in Tegaldowo, Bantul Regency, about 10km away from the original site and decided to purchase it. After the purchase, Pringgomukti reached out to Arkom in 2016 and asked them for assistance with the planning of the new site. Together, they designed a plan, which was sensitive to the capacities and needs of the group. Arkom also supported them to set up savings groups for expenses related to the

⁸ Pringgo = name of the site; mukti = long life

Kampung dwellers' experiences of land and housing tenure⁹

Kampung dwellers have various tenure arrangements. Within the Kalijawi network, members mainly inhabit self-built houses on Sultan's Ground along the rivers, on land along railway tracks or on contested private land, meaning land with unclear or disputed ownership. Other tenure arrangements of Kalijawi members include traditional Ngindung agreements on private land or short-term leases on land owned by the administrative village (Kas Desa). Kalijawi members have often been living in their houses and settlements for years and usually do not hold any form of written agreements or certificate for the land they are occupying. The weak tenure security does not only put them at the constant risk of eviction, but their informality also complicates their relationship with the government, "which does not want to provide support for them" (Roitman, 2019b, p. 159). One of their central demands is the right to stay. The following stories of Kalijawi members show the complexity of tenure security in Yogyakarta and highlight disconnects from the mainstream understanding and approaches.



Fig 52. Yanti.

Yanti lives on the riverbank of the Winongo River, on land that is not registered yet but the Sultanate claims it to be Sultan's Ground. She has been living there since 1996 –first with her parents, after marrying she moved to a separate part of the house. The foundation of the house was already there when her family moved to the area. They then invested into renovation and built the rest of the structure themselves. Yanti's family currently does not pay any lease to the Sultanate. However, her family pays annual land and property taxes to the local government. Her settlement is part of the PTSI programme and is thus in the process of registering and formalising the land. This means the land will be registered in the Sultanate's name and the residents will receive kekancingan letters as official lease agreements. The process was initiated in 2017 and is still ongoing. According to Yanti, the process is confusing and there is no official guideline that explains the process. The community therefore has to keep going to the various involved offices and ask about the next steps. This takes a lot of time.

⁹ These case studies are based on informal interviews with Kalijawi members. All interviews were conducted between 30 September- 8 October 2019

The case of Yanti shows that despite the efforts of land formalisation, obstacles for urban poor remain. The process of land formalisation puts a large share of the responsibility into the hands of communities and lacks transparency.



Fig 53. Sujianti.



Fig 54. Atik

Atik and Sujianti live in a settlement along the Gadjah Wong river in Yogyakarta. Atik lives with her family (husband and two girls) and her sister in the house of her mother since 2012. Sujianti lives in her house with her three children. The land in this settlement is owned by the administrative village (Kas Desa). Sujianti explained that she had to make an initial payment to the village and the former land occupant when she moved there. Since then, she pays an annual rent to the village, which has increased over the years from Rp. 100,000 to currently Rp. 150,000. Other than the receipt of the annual payments, both Atik and Sujianti do not have any form of written agreement. They both own the houses they are living in –whereas Atik's family bought the house from the former land owner, Sujianti's family built their house themselves in an incremental process.

The case of Atik and Sujianti shows on the one hand that a seemingly accepted tenure form –renting from the administrative village– does not necessarily lead to de jure tenure security, as they both cannot show any legal agreement or certificate. On the other hand, it also shows how a similar situation can be perceived differently. Whereas Atik is not worried about her tenure security and is convinced that she will be able to stay there for many more years to come, Sujianti said that she feels safe now, but she is worried about what will happen in the next five to ten years as the village can take back the land at any given time, if they want to use it for other purposes.



Fig 55. Nani.

Nani lives in a rented room with her husband and her daughter. They settled in a settlement along the railway tracks, also bordering the Winongo river. Nani and her family have been living there for nine years and pay a monthly rent to the house owner, who does not own the land the house is standing on. Nani does not have a written contract –the conditions of inhabiting the house are based on an oral agreement. When she moved to the settlement, she had to ask for permission by the RT and RW leader. When they accepted her request, they registered her name and issued her an ID card (KTP, Kartu Tanda Penduduk

which translates literally into Resident Identity Card), an important prerequisite for the access to local government services. Nani is very worried that she has to leave the settlement soon due to rumours about the expansion of the railway tracks.

Nani's case study shows how she moves between spaces of recognition and neglect. On the one hand, she is formally registered in her RT, on the other hand her settlement is perceived as a squatter settlement. The informal status of the settlement makes the residents ineligible for government programmes for infrastructure upgrading and renders them at high risk of eviction.



Fig 56. Ainun.

Ainun and her family live along the Winongo river. She has been living in this house all her life –it was her great grandmother who first came to this settlement. At first, the house was inhabited with a Ngindung agreement. In 1918 however, it turned out that the alleged landowner did not have any proof of his ownership. Since then, it has been contested who actually owns the land and Ainun's family has not paid any rent to anyone since. Ainun's settlement is well located, close to the city-centre. She is worried that developments in and around the settlement will eventually force her to move. Wiwin lived close to Ainun's settlement with a Ngindung agreement until she was evicted because of a hotel development in 2013.

Similar to Ainun, Wiwin has been living in the same house since she was born. The first person in her family to hold the agreement was her grandfather. It was then passed on to her mother and then to Wiwin. The monthly rent has increased significantly over time –it doubled from her grandfather's generation to her mother's and almost doubled again when Wiwin inherited the Ngindung agreement. Wiwin says that the conceptualisation of Ngindung has changed over time –whereas it was still considered to be a good and safe living arrangement at her grandfather's time, it now no longer offers a secure solution. According to her, the increased land value has led to a competition around land at the expense of the urban poor. Powerful people from outside of Yogyakarta buy land in strategic areas. Because of this, Ngindung will disappear in strategic locations over time.

The cases of Ainun and Wiwin show how tenure arrangements might change over time and that they are informed by risks that are sometimes beyond residents' perception. Such changes are largely informed by structural drivers in the city –in the case of inner-city informal settlements these are mainly linked to private sector and tourism developments that push the urban poor out.



Fig 57. Ambar, Wiwin and Ekowati.



Fig 58. Tatik.

Ambar and Ekowati have both lived in the same settlement as Wiwin and have been evicted in 2013 due to the development of a hotel. Since then they are living alternately in rented flats and with family. After they had been evicted, they –together with other households– collectively bought land about 10km outside the city. Due to delays in the building process, no houses have been built yet (see the case of Pringgomukti community below). Despite the challenges they experienced since the eviction, Ambar and Ekowati are not interested in finding another solution. For both, the long-term vision of being together with the former community is more important than having immediate comfort and living in a central location. Tatik has a very different land and housing arrangement. She lives on land owned by her mother. Her mother has an ownership certificate since 1985. Currently there are also nine households living on the same plot of land with renting agreements. Even though Tatik has de jure tenure security, she sees great importance in improving everyone's tenure security in her settlement: because if the settlement is good, there are less worries and everyone can live comfortably.

These cases may be quite different, however they show that tenure security has a collective element and that being together is sometimes more important than having individual tenure security.



Fig 59. Members of the Pringgomukti community collecting their savings during their weekly meeting.
- MSc UDP Student Group,

2019

development of the new site. Due to several challenges and delays in the purchase and building permit application process, no houses have been built to this day.

The case of Pringgomukti shows that despite owning land, there are obstacles for the urban poor to obtain the permits that allow them to inhabit the land formally. Such challenges are mainly linked to land and housing policies that are constituted to match the needs of higher-income groups and do not accommodate for the capacities and needs of lower income households. In the case of Pringgomukti, such challenges are mainly linked to the regulations of the minimum plot size for a house. Arkom works together with Pringgomukti to find ways of how land and housing tenure can be formalised in this case and by doing so, aims at setting a precedent for more flexible solutions, suitable for the urban poor. The main potentials of the case are:

1. It highlights collective land ownership as a more affordable way for urban poor community to access land, hold land titles and thus secure their tenure.
2. It advocates for more flexible building and planning regulations that move away from a one-solution-fits-all targeting the middle class to

more accommodating and flexible regulations that reflect the reality and needs of lower income households.

3. The case study furthermore shows how collective saving can be empowering in different ways. It not only improves the community's economic resilience but having a savings record often is a precondition to accessing government loans and subsidies. Moreover, collective saving strengthens their power from within as well as their bargaining power with governments.

Promoting security of tenure for disadvantaged settlements

In a donor-funded project called *Promoting Security of Tenure for Disadvantaged Settlements*, Arkom works with Kalijawi to create two pilot models of how land and housing issues can be addressed in such settlements. In this attempt, tenure security is seen as a door opener, which triggers other forms of infrastructure and service improvement. Recognising that the issue of land in informal settlements is complicated, Arkom follows the approach that land should be formalised where possible and that the preferred solution for tenure security is (collective) land ownership. If this is not possible, the focus should lie on the negotiation of good legal leases. In cases where land issues cannot be solved, the community is nevertheless advised to think about on-site upgrading in order to improve living conditions. Even though that does not help to improve de jure tenure security, it might impact the de facto security of tenure.

In early October 2019, initial collaborative planning workshops with community representatives from the sites, members of Arkom and Kalijawi, the local government and other NGOs were conducted. The discussions aimed to highlight current problems and lead to ideas of how security of tenure can be improved in the two selected sites (Notoyudan and Papringan/Ambarrukmo). The discussions were structured along four themes: *land, housing and infrastructure, finances and community organisation*. Participants were not only encouraged to think about new ways of securing tenure, but also to think about ways of how such plans could be linked to existing government programmes. The discussion highlighted several ideas covering (partial) relocation, land formalisation or on-site upgrading. In a next step, these ideas will be consolidated and then prioritised in a participatory manner. This will lead to the development of a more concrete plan for each community, which will then collaboratively be implemented.

This approach is an interesting example of a co-designing process for solutions. It emphasises the importance of encouraging collaboration between various stakeholders, including the local government, as early

in the process as possible. Arkom uses such collaborative workshops as a space to highlight the potential of collectives –in regard to land ownership, but also in regard to self-built housing, infrastructure upgrading and saving. Learnings, ideas and experiences from these pilot models will be gathered and consolidated into a guide for other communities who wish to replicate such an approach.

Approach 3: Advocacy & building partnerships

Arkom has long-lasting experience working with communities. They enjoy a high level of trust from these community organisations and are welcome partners for collaboration in kampung. Until recently, the focus of Arkom's work has been on site-specific projects, helping communities to alleviate their immediate needs. This is now starting to shift to a more strategic attempt to contribute to structural change at a bigger scale. Arkom's third approach is therefore linked to advocacy and building partnerships.

Arkom individually reaches out to potential partners by inviting them to participate in their activities. However, they also see importance in creating platforms for multi-stakeholder collaboration. An example for such a platform is a four-day public event to celebrate World Habitat Day 2019, which Arkom co-organised with Kalijawi, the Housing Resource Centre (HRC) and Kotaku¹⁰. Bringing together different stakeholders from across the province, this event was used to collectively think about tenure security and the state of informal settlements in Yogyakarta. Whereas the relationship to the local and provincial governments is slowly changing with Arkom gaining more recognition, partnerships with the private sector are still weak.

Co-production of knowledge is key to Arkom's work. This is done through collaborative workshops as explained above, but also through exchange visits to other organisations working in similar fields. Recently, Arkom organised a learning visit to Thailand to study the Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI), a government agency which coordinates the development of community organisations and facilitates a collective housing programme. For this learning visit, Arkom invited members from the community, from other NGOs and representatives from the government. Through such activities, Arkom is not only expanding its network but also facilitates the building of trust across horizontal and vertical levels.

10 National programme 'Cities without slums' (Kota Tanpa Kumuh, Kotaku).



Fig 60. Habitat Day 2019 event organised by Arkom, Kalijawi, HRC and Kotaku.

Also in regard to building partnerships and advocacy, Arkom primarily takes the role of mediator and enabler. Arkom supports communities in their efforts to establish closer relationships with the local and provincial government and helps communities to establish a dialogue and exchange with similar organisations in Yogyakarta, Indonesia and within the ACHR network; Arkom helps to bridge scales. Nevertheless, in the process Arkom also establishes its own relationships with these stakeholders, which are strategic ties that might prove to be door-openers for achieving change at a bigger scale in the future.

Bridging scales

Building on the three approaches outlined above, Arkom bridges scales in three ways:

1. Bridging scales by filling knowledge gaps

Arkom facilitates participatory, people-centred processes that enable collective learning. By making people's experiences visible, this process aims at increased recognition of the different realities in the kampung of Yogyakarta. In regard to tenure security, Arkom's

approach to community-research, allows for the documentation of the lived experiences in the kampung. This not only has the potential for increased recognition of kampung dwellers and their contribution to making the city, but also for the improvement of communities' ability to oppose structural drivers and daily threats.

2. Bridging scales by showcasing collaborative best practices

Arkom invests in creating small-scale pilot models that can be replicated at bigger scales. Whereas the focus here lies on scaling-up, as in expanding the reach, the approach just as much builds on multi-stakeholder approaches, and thus collaboration. Such small-scale pilots furthermore allow for the testing of alternative approaches, such as communal land titles and the potential of self-built housing that might require a flexibilisation of existing building permits.

3. Bridging scales through horizontal and vertical networks

Arkom sees importance in creating platforms for collective learning in order to find suitable and sustainable solutions to challenges of urban poor in Yogyakarta. In order to strengthen bargaining power, the focus thereby not only lies on the establishment of partnerships with powerful stakeholders from the public and private sector, but also on the expansion of the horizontal network to generate a city-wide movement. Within this, Arkom acts as an enabler –as a mediator that facilitates exchange at horizontal and vertical levels.

Despite these promising approaches to achieve change across scales, some challenges remain. These are linked to:

1. Unintended trade-offs through the formalisation of land and housing arrangements

Due to the complexity at hand, there is a need for an in-depth analysis of unintentional trade-offs for households if tenure security gets improved in a settlement. Whereas land formalisation for example brings tenure security, it also gives residents the freedom to sell their land at market-based prices. This again leads to increasing land values and thus gives fuel to the very same system the urban poor are trying to fight. Similarly, when land is formalised and a settlement is able to upgrade, this affects the cost of rent and thus has unintended negative consequence for dwellers with lease agreements. Whereas understanding communities' realities is an important entry point to prevent harm, these findings ideally are strengthened through research and systematic risk assessments.

2. Prioritisation of the ownership model

Individual land ownership or land leases and house ownership might not always be the best option. Other forms of securing tenure, such as renting, remain underexplored in this approach. Especially in a context where large shares of the urban poor have been accessing benevolent renting housing arrangements for decades, thinking about ways to build on these traditions could be an interesting and promising way to go. It would therefore be interesting to move away from the state's approach to push for land ownership as the preferred solution to securing tenure, and to invest into collaboratively exploring alternative ways of securing tenure and exercising the urban poor's right to inhabit urban spaces.

3. Grey areas of legality

The legal framework is an important boundary that needs to be respected, but also has to be challenged in some regards. Settlement upgrading in areas where land issues have not been resolved, remains a risky business. Such an approach would ideally be strengthened though a strategy of how to challenge the mainstream, like Arkom is currently doing with the small-scale pilot models. By collaborating with various stakeholders, Arkom creates room for renegotiating the ordinary.

4. Sustainable policy change

The long-term vision of Arkom in regard to tenure security is a policy that recognises informal settlements as one of the strategic areas for planning. Whereas Arkom suggests ways of how existing settlements can be more secure and safe for residents to live in, there is little focus on how efforts can be sustained. An attempt to achieve long-term change would thus be the development of a range of short-, medium- and longer-term policies.

Last, but not least, it should be recognised that the most effective way of increasing security of tenure for many households may not be through the formalisation of their relationship to land, but through the increase of other rights, such as improved access to credit or services (Payne and Durand-Lasserve, 2012). This approach will be explored in the next section.

Fig 61. (facing page) Jalan Palagan (Palagan Street) in Sleman Regency.





Exploring alternative trajectories:

Adapting and designing programmes aimed at the urban poor

by Nada Sallam

The Government of Indonesia has, in the past, run innovative and progressive housing programmes for the urban poor. One such example, outlined earlier, is KIP, which operated as a government-assisted, community-led programme with a focus on physical, social and economic improvement in slums. Offering tenure security to residents through formal recognition of their kampung, KIP served as a case of best-practice worldwide (Juliman, 2006). Today, however, state-led interventions largely fail to address the needs of the urban poor; with a clear disconnect between national-level policies and programmes, and the complexities and realities on the ground.

Critical of the current mainstream approach, Arkom works to promote and support grounded, collaborative and people-centred alternatives, viewing them as important to the sustainability and success of any intervention. To illustrate this, the following section seeks to explore the shortcomings of current programmes and policies, and present two alternative strategies, proposed and used by Arkom to address these shortcomings and support people's access to adequate housing and secure tenure.

Land and housing programmes: a gap analysis

With rapid urban growth, the “numbers of low- and middle-income people residing in cities” in Indonesia has increased (Hudalah et al., 2016, p. 186).

The vast majority of them, however, cannot afford to purchase housing through formal markets without the support of government. In fact, while the middle 40% may require basic subsidy enhancements that match their savings, the bottom 40% live close to the poverty line with little-to-no savings, rendering them unable to afford even “basic starter units” (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2015, p. 8). Increasing land prices produce a similar problem, with much of the urban poor being forced either out of city-centres or into informal settlements often built on contested land with poor or non-existent infrastructure and services (Hudalah et al., 2016, p. 187). As a result, most houses in the country are built by owner-occupiers, and are often done so informally and incrementally. Such houses are also frequently of poor quality, many of them without permanent structures. According to Bappenas, “45% of houses [in the country] are considered substandard by some measure, either because they are over-crowded, built of at least one poor quality material, or do not have access to basic services” (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2015, p. 7).

The government has sought to address these challenges through a variety of national- and local-level programmes and regulations. These can largely be categorised into four types, namely: housing provision; housing finance; infrastructure provision/upgrading; and land. One of the main problems with the government’s approach pertains to the *access-conditions* it has set for its programmes (see Table 12). For the urban poor, particularly those most in need of government support, the conditions are neither practical, nor realistic; and mirror, to a large extent, the conditions set by conventional lenders.

Condition 1: Formal land tenure

As described in the previous section, the urban poor experience and perceive of tenure security in a far more complex and nuanced manner than the government. Without freehold, individual titles, however, they are unable to qualify for any of the current programmes, including those aimed at settlement-wide upgrading and infrastructure provision, namely: Kotaku. In fact, government statistics on *slums* and *inadequate housing* overlook those without formal tenure, and are therefore grossly misleading. In Yogyakarta, this condition applies even to those with specific agreements to live on Sultan’s Ground. For example, despite the fact that those with *Magersari* titles experience a high level of tenure security, they too risk being excluded from such programmes, as a result of administrative limitations at the national level.

Table 12. Conditions of access to government programmes and regulations

Category	Name	Conditions			
		Formal Land Tenure ¹¹	Formal Employment ¹²	Savings ¹³	Individual Access ¹⁴
Housing Provision	BSPS	✓	✓	X	✓
	Rumah Terdempak	✓	X	X	✓
	Rusunawa	N/A	X	X	✓
	Rusunami	N/A	X	X	✓
	Rusus	N/A	✓	X	✓
	UU 20/2011	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Hunian Berimbang 1:2:3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Housing Finance	FLPP	✓	✓	X	✓
	SSB/SSA	✓	✓	X	✓
	SBUM	✓	✓	X	✓
	BP2BT	✓	X	✓	✓
	PSMP	✓	X	✓	✓
Infra-structure	PSU	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Kotaku	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A
Land	PTSL	✓	N/A	N/A	✓
	RTHP	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A

Condition 2: Formal employment

Most Indonesians (around 60% of the workforce) are informally employed (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2015, p. 38) and yet, many of the programmes listed above include formal employment (the ability to produce a salary slip) as a prerequisite. For the housing finance programmes open to independent workers, applicants are expected to, at a minimum, produce proof of financial activity recorded in formal accounts. Excluding informal workers,

11 The land in question must not be of contested ownership; and applicants must have formal rights over the land.

12 Formal employment as an official prerequisite (i.e. programmes can only be accessed if the applicant works in the formal sector)

13 Savings as an official prerequisite (i.e. programmes can only be accessed if the applicant already has a predefined amount of money saved in a bank)

14 Programmes offered on an individual basis (i.e. to each household separately rather than to a group of households)



most of whom are low-income, significantly reduces the effectiveness of government support.

Fig 63. Informal waste collector.

Condition 3: Savings

Two of the government's housing finance programmes require applicants to save a certain amount of money (calculated as a percentage of the cost of a down-payment) in lieu of a salary slip. Whilst this helps account for those without formal employment, savings must be held in commercial bank accounts, effectively excluding those who may be saving through less formal mechanisms, including community savings groups. Furthermore, as highlighted earlier, much of the urban poor live around the poverty line, and have insufficient-to-no savings. The remaining housing finance programmes do not explicitly require savings, but remain largely out of reach, as loan terms fail to account for people's financial capacities.

Condition 4: Individual access

All of the government's current programmes are offered on a household basis; requiring applicants to hold both freehold land titles and demonstrate sufficient savings or satisfactory repayment capacities as individuals. This makes accessing programmes difficult for the urban poor who would

be better served by programmes that offer larger bulk amounts at the community level, and allow groups to manage finances collectively. This applies equally to the condition of individual land titles, which significantly reduces the likelihood of land-ownership for the urban poor, primarily due to issues of affordability.

Beyond these specific conditions, current government programmes also fail to reach those most in need as a result of targeting and appraisal issues. As demonstrated earlier, the specific design of programmes often means that only middle-class households can afford to access them. In the case of housing finance and provision in particular, the government's investment is primarily captured by the middle 40%. Simultaneously, the appraisal process for these programmes, which works to determine eligibility, is not always fair or transparent. According to the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (PUPR), low-income households (*Masyarakat Berpenghasilan Rendah* or MBR) are those with limited purchasing power, who can only acquire housing with government support. Ministerial Regulation No. 10/2019 lays out the specific qualifying criteria for MBR, and the housing acquisition requirements. Despite this, local-level politics frequently influence the appraisal process, which is conducted on a household basis at the village level (Kelurahan/Desa), resulting in the exclusion of eligible households.

A third shortcoming within the government's approach concerns the issue of land. As described in more detail in the previous section, access to affordable land is a key challenge for urban poor communities in Yogyakarta. For one, insufficient effort is being made to make or keep land affordable. The limited supply, combined with competing interests over it, has inflated its price and created limited incentives to ensuring its affordability. At the same time, though the regularisation of existing land, namely that upon which informal settlements are built, is the only realistic way by which the government can meet the *housing need* of the urban poor, no current programmes work to achieve this. The PTSL programme aims to ease the process of registering land, but has not been particularly effective in the case of informal settlements. In Yogyakarta, this is further complicated by the region's special status and Sultanate's ownership-claims over large portions of the land. As the national government fails to prioritise land regularisation, local governments are unlikely to take the matter on, given their limited budgets.

The issuing of building permits based on unnecessarily stringent standards represents a fourth key flaw in the current approach. Unrealistic expectations regarding minimum plot sizes, as demonstrated in the Pringgomukti case

described earlier, for example, makes it difficult to get approval through the formal route, and consequently disincentivises the urban poor from seeking such official permits out. In addition, the process can be both costly and time-consuming, and thus burdensome for communities. On the supply side, regulations intended to ensure private sector production of affordable housing is poorly-enforced, and often includes loopholes. As the incentives for developers to build affordable housing are practically non-existent, it is unlikely to occur without sustained government pressure and proper enforcement.

The final key shortcoming is the superficial nature of community engagement in government programmes. This applies to both the designing of programmes (as can be discerned through the clear mismatch between the urban poor's needs and what is on offer), as well as their implementation. Decentralisation has not been particularly effective for community engagement as local leaders often use their influence and power unfairly. National programmes are often administered at the Kelurahan level, which can include up to 250 RTs, each of which can have numerous community savings groups. The resultant perceived inefficiency of working with community groups, compounded with perceptions of the urban poor as incapable or untrustworthy, creates little motive for the government to deal with the grassroots directly. Ultimately, its current concern does not appear to be the actual mobilisation or engagement of communities, but rather the ability to describe its programmes as 'community-led'.

Alternative approaches: Arkom's strategies

Given the largely inaccessible nature of current programmes, Arkom has developed a variety of strategies aimed at supporting the urban poor's ability to secure adequate housing. The first such strategy is centred around direct collaboration with the government, and aims at negotiating access to existing programmes whilst simultaneously reshaping them with communities so as to better match both their abilities and needs. The second strategy adopts a broader approach, designed to provide urban poor communities with access to, and control over, larger pools of capital than is currently at their disposal, with the ultimate aim of empowering communities and strengthening their bargaining power vis-a-vis other urban actors. As a result, the first strategy addresses specific flaws within the government's approach, while the latter also seeks to overcome the larger challenge of limited financial access by the urban poor.



Fig 64. On-site resettlement in Mrican.

Strategy #1: The case of Mrican

In 2013, the Sleman Environmental Agency was working on a conservation programme for the Gajah Wong river, along which exists a large number of settlements built on reclaimed riverbank land. In line with conventional government policy, the programme made no attempt at engaging communities living in these settlements, due to their informal (and in some cases, illegal) status. Having already worked with a number of these settlements, Arkom approached the agency, making the case that any positive impact achieved by the conservation programme would not be sustained without the active involvement of riverbank residents. Thus, working alongside communities –including members of Kalijawi– with the aim of building both awareness and capacity, Arkom began mapping settlements and developing basic plans. This included collectively considering alternatives to forced relocation, as rumours circulated regarding the potential building of a riverside buffer zone by the government. In five of these settlements (RTs), in the Padukan of Mrican, comprehensive plans for settlement-wide upgrading were developed.

The following year, President Jokowi launched the 100-0-100 programme aimed at ensuring that 100% of Indonesians have access to clean drinking



Fig 65. Buffer zone development in Mrican.

water, 0% live in slums, and 100% have access to proper sanitation. This was then followed by a gubernatorial decree, issued by the Bupati of Sleman, that identified 45 RTs in the regency as slum areas, and thus eligible for the government's programme. Once again, the government had failed to consider the settlements along the river, prompting Arkom and Kalijawi to meet with the vice-Bupati to argue the importance of working with all settlements regardless of their land-status, if the government did indeed want to achieve the 100-0-100 goal. Successful negotiation with the Sleman government resulted in the revision of the decree and came to include all of the informal settlements previously identified and mapped.

In 2016, the government hired consultants to begin the planning process for the building of the buffer zone in Mrican. When one of the RT leaders met the consultants as they were surveying the area, he informed them of the maps and plans previously developed by Arkom and the residents, and proposed that they look over them. Satisfied with what they saw, the consultants subsequently agreed to use them and submitted them to the government for approval. Recognising both their preparedness and capabilities, the following year, the government awarded Arkom a contract to develop a detailed engineering design for the settlement. This document would be

used to determine the entire planning and implementation process, and thus offered them an opportunity to shape the programme according to the community's needs. First, they were able to reduce the potential negative impact of the buffer zone. Whereas the government originally proposed the building of a 15m buffer which would have resulted in the relocation of all households, Arkom and the residents instead proposed a more realistic 3m one. Second, they were able to ensure that the budget included sufficient compensation for residents impacted by the buffer. Those whose houses would be minimally impacted would receive compensation to rebuild their ground floor (in most cases rebuilding the wall facing the river) and to build a second floor to make up for the floor space lost to the buffer zone. Those whose houses would be made significantly smaller, leaving them with insufficient space to live, would instead be relocated into two-storey flats in a building to be built on-site, and given ownership over the flats as compensation. Third, Arkom was able to advocate for money from the government to be channeled directly to residents, rather than through the Desa or Padukuhan, as is usually the case. This guaranteed residents receipt of their compensation in full, and allowed them to manage the money themselves throughout the development process. Fourth, it enabled them to influence construction plans, and opened up the space for them to use community construction teams so as to build residents' capacities, and reduce overall costs. Finally, it ensured real community engagement as residents took the lead in shaping the process according to their own needs, abilities and aspirations.

The success of this collaboration was built on a number of things. The programme, as initially conceived, completely overlooked informal settlements; it was neither inclusive nor considerate of resident's realities, and exacerbated the existing imbalance and distrust between communities and the government. Arkom's approach instead centred itself around the active involvement of communities, the building of people's capacities – helping them to be both proactive and prepared, the establishment of new relationships built on trust and a demonstration of people's abilities, and the presentation of realistic and convincing alternatives that could satisfy the different actors involved. It is important to note that challenges did arise throughout this process, demonstrating that negotiation and the building of trust are not one-time activities, but rather processes that must be actively and continuously managed. This and a number of other key learnings are explored further below.

Strategy #2: Kalijawi and the cooperatives model

One of the main obstacles to accessing adequate housing for the urban poor

remains their inability to secure sufficient capital to finance the building, or purchasing, of a home or plot of land. Without proper government support, as described earlier, most poor communities are forced to rely on their own limited savings and are thus left with little choice but to develop informal housing solutions, often marred by uncertainty. Accessing capital for land and housing through conventional means –through banks, for example– is itself largely out of reach as negative perceptions of the urban poor, and a low-risk appetite, continue to dominate (see box below for more).

Obstacles to accessing loans from commercial banks

- *A regular income:* Perhaps the greatest obstacle for poor borrowers is the condition that they prove that they have a regular monthly income, which most of the poor households working in the informal sector, self-employed or casual labour jobs do not.
- *Collateral:* Another obstacle is the need to have legal title to the property they want to buy, which most of the urban poor don't have.
- *High down-payments:* To reduce the lender's risk, many housing loans come with the condition that a certain part of the total housing cost is born by the borrower. Poor households often do not have the means to raise such "downpayments".
- *Small loans:* Given their low income, the poor often require small, incremental loans which can be easily paid back. Processing such small loans is not cost effective for banks.

(UN-Habitat, 2008, p. 16)

Given these challenges, Arkom has been working to develop an alternative that allows the urban poor to gain access to, and control over, larger amounts of capital, in ways that account for their needs and realities. The model, which resembles and draws on examples from elsewhere in the region, including CODI in Thailand (Boonyabancha 2003; 2005), the Slum Upgrading Facility's (SUF) Local Finance Facilities piloted by UN-Habitat (UN-Habitat 2008), and the Community-Led Infrastructure Financing Facility (CLIFF) in India (McLeod 2002), is being developed in collaboration with partners from civil society and the community, with the ambition of also bringing actors from the public and private sectors on board.

The approach is two-pronged: first, Arkom has been working to encourage and support the establishment of savings groups in settlements throughout



Fig 66. Kalijawi workshop.

Yogyakarta, as well as a larger community development fund to link the various settlements together (see Kalijawi p.99). This serves a number of functions, namely: increasing people's savings and access to loans with appropriate repayment terms; building their financial management skills and providing them with a means by which to demonstrate their repayment capacities (by serving as an informal tracker or credit score); reawakening community collectiveness and cooperation (building on the foundations of *gotong royong*); and enabling communities to plan and implement small-scale projects that can serve as precedents in future collaboration with different stakeholders. Overall, savings groups offer communities both the opportunity to address their immediate needs (ex. covering emergency medical costs) as well as to begin to challenge larger systemic issues by strengthening their collective bargaining power and capacities (Archer, 2012; The SEEP Network, 2010).

The second component of Arkom's approach builds on this through two further steps. First, Arkom and Kalijawi have worked to formalise the existing network of savings groups by registering them as a legal cooperative. This provides them with legitimacy, and enables formal cooperation with the government, which is normally reluctant to partner with informal



Fig 67. Kalijawi newsletter (left) and Kalijawi workshop (right).

community groups. Second, they aim to develop a multi-stakeholder primary cooperative that acts as an intermediary finance institution set up to source and distribute funds to communities through their own (secondary) cooperatives. The rationale for setting up this model is to address the specific obstacles to financial access for the urban poor. First, by acting as a trusted body, the primary cooperative is able to secure greater funding from various stakeholders, and consequently increase the capital amounts accessible to people. Designed to host actors from a range of sectors on its board, it is able to offer a sense of legitimacy and reassurance to potential lenders, and strengthen relationships of trust between the different actors –particularly between the urban poor and the public and private sectors. These funds can then be used to cover the costs of construction and upgrading at the household and settlement levels, as well as the cost of land-purchasing, surveying, and more. Unlike other models (including the government's current programmes), the primary cooperative will offer collective lending to communities through their cooperatives, rather than doing so on an individual basis, helping to reduce the burden on each household.

The loan conditions offered will also account for the economic realities of the urban poor, with appropriate loan terms and interest rates. By

scaling the potential of savings groups, this model allows communities to collectively shape large-scale interventions to meet their needs, and increases community collectiveness by uniting disparate and fragmented groups of the urban poor. In providing communities with the opportunity to manage their own system of finance, it offers them a tool with which to advocate to, and negotiate with the government. As with other models, this is built on the belief that “as long as *control over money* is in someone else’s hands, so will the fate of [people’s] land and houses,” and thus makes “money and control over it the *fundamental tool* in the process of bringing about change in cities and reclaiming power over [residents’] lives” (ACHR, 2007, p.1). Ultimately, the ambition of this model is to host a large-scale revolving fund that combines the savings of communities alongside the investments made by other actors to fund future interventions that address the need for adequate and secure housing in ways that are truly people-centred, grounded, and empowering for the urban poor.

Critical reflection and key takeaways

As with all of Arkom’s work, the two strategies described above are based on a fundamentally people-centred approach to housing, and reflect a deep-seated belief that all people should have the ability and right to live in and shape urban spaces. The success of these strategies is built on a number of key learnings from both their own, and others’ experiences to date, and an understanding of the remaining challenges needing to be addressed:

Arkom, Kalijawi, and their partners across Yogyakarta recognise the fundamental importance of being both proactive and prepared. Be it through the presentation of detailed maps and plans, or precedents set elsewhere, demonstrating this has served as a critical means through which they have managed to engage and reassure potential partners. Attempting as much as possible to respond to people’s hesitations with concrete solutions or precedents has gone a long way to building their confidence and helping them to see the potential within Arkom’s proposals. As highlighted elsewhere, however, this reassurance is not established through one interaction, but rather requires constant negotiation. Indeed, when trying new things, there is very likely to be pushback from those who have benefited from the conventional way of doing things, and so learning to manage this conflict is an important component of Arkom’s work. Building trust, moreover, takes time, and efforts must be channelled in multiple directions, rather than simply centred around a few key relationships.

Targeting all levels (from the community, to the heads of government

agencies) Arkom works to build strong relationships and manage different and often competing interests and expectations; aiming to ensure that everyone feels adequately included. Building communities' capacities has helped in this regard –as when equipped with the confidence and skills needed to deal in different situations, communities' dependence on others decreases dramatically, rendering them more likely to take initiative, and establish balanced and equal partnerships on their own.

Ultimately, though much has been accomplished to date, continuing to build strategic relationships with key urban actors, mobilising and empowering communities across the city, engaging in advocacy towards the government and others to shift perceptions of the urban poor, and presenting feasible alternatives that will convince and reassure them, require perseverance and will remain of critical importance in all of Arkom's work in the future.

Grounding Arkom's approach to people-centred housing in Yogyakarta

As explored in the previous section, Arkom's work is very much structured around people-centred approaches to housing. They build on the belief that communities should be agents of change, and that they are best positioned to find suitable and sustainable solutions to their own challenges. They work to empower communities through capacity building in different domains, including:

1. Supporting and initiating the formation of savings groups –as in the case of Kalijawi and Pringgomukti– and thus helping communities to strengthen their financial capacities;
2. Encouraging communities to build on their existing technical skills and supporting capacity-building in regard to research know-how, mapping and planning activities, and construction skills; and
3. Creating room for communities to be acknowledged as experts of their lives and their environment and allowing for the generation of knowledge at the community level. They encourage communities to present their understanding of the challenges they face and help them shape this bottom-up perspective into arguments that can counter the state's approach.

All of these activities build on the belief that there is strength in the collective, and that bringing people together is a crucial part of strengthening their bargaining power and resilience.

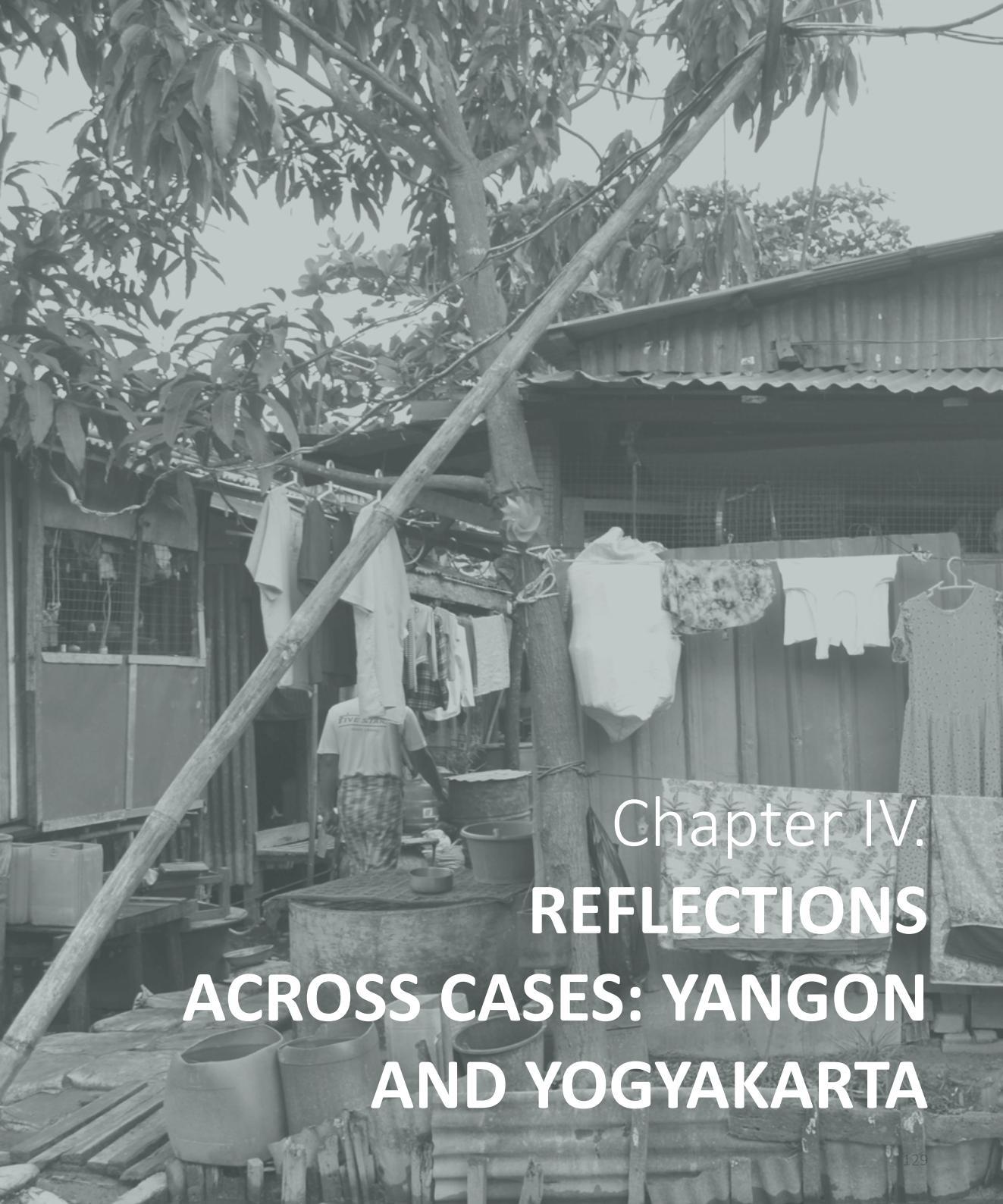
The power of the collective is also key in Arkom's approach to housing. Building on the spirit of mutual assistance, which is deeply embedded in the Indonesian culture, Arkom explores and encourages collective land and housing solutions. By doing so, they recognise existing community capacities and –as community architects– promote participatory design, planning and implementation of housing projects, as can be seen in the case of Pringgomukti community.

As state-led housing programmes largely fail to address the needs of the urban poor, Arkom is invested in presenting alternative collective solutions that have the potential to challenge the mainstream. Such pilot

models are site-specific (Mrican, Pringgomukti, Notoyudan and Papringan/Ambarrukmo), but also linked to processes (Kalijawi's cooperatives model). Mainstream approaches to housing are furthermore challenged through the dissemination of alternative, bottom-up definitions of technical terms and concepts, like the people-centred definition of tenure security. Similarly, by advocating for more flexible building and planning regulations, which are in line with the reality and needs of lower income households, they challenge the conceptualisation of the urban poor's self-built housing as necessarily being substandard.

Arkom works in collaboration with different stakeholders in the city to identify gaps and to collectively find alternative solutions for the urban poor to exercise their right to inhabit the city. In the process, Arkom aims at empowering communities to be prepared and proactive to address and oppose developments in the city that push them out. Within this work, Arkom is a mediator, linking different ends and bridging scales. They help facilitate partnerships between communities and the local and provincial government to enable more large-scale, long-term change.

Whereas Arkom grounds their approaches through close collaboration with communities, they, at the same time, push for the recognition of community architecture as a profession in academia and politics. Creating a bigger network of community architects and establishing the profession by embedding it into the curriculum of universities, raises awareness and trains professionals to be more sensitive to the realities of kampung life. This, in the long-term, has the potential to help counter the structural drivers which threaten communities' abilities to inhabit urban spaces.



Chapter IV.
**REFLECTIONS
ACROSS CASES: YANGON
AND YOGYAKARTA**



Key learnings from people-centred development

As with other actors in the ACHR and CAN networks, WfW and Arkom are continuously learning to navigate through challenges and capitalise on the opportunities that arise in their respective contexts. The following section serves as a reflection, across both cases, of a number of key learnings and considerations that have both helped to enable, and continue to guide, their efforts to promote and support people-centred approaches to housing and urban development, more broadly.

Lesson 1: Putting people at the centre

The realities of the urban poor are more complex than what is often assumed in top-down responses designed and implemented by the state. In many cases, state-led programmes not only provide fragmented answers to broader problems, but also overlook the importance of collective solutions that go beyond the individual household level. Moreover, they repeatedly disregard the daily practices and capacities of the target group. As a result, they exclude the very same people they allegedly aim to support. The two case studies show how challenges for the urban poor are interconnected, and that *collectiveness* for them is more than an immediate survival strategy. Whereas being together strengthens their resilience and confidence in organising and allows them to tackle experienced challenges collaboratively, it is also an aspiration for their future.

People, as experts of their life and environment, give important insights into how different aspects of development are linked, and how solutions can be developed to be more suitable and sustainable. Such bottom-up approaches thus have the potential to challenge the mainstream and push for a change in the design and implementation of state-led development approaches. When proven successful, they also can contribute to policy change and a shift of legal boundaries. At the same time, however, it is important to keep in mind that

the roots of a challenge experienced by a community might lie somewhere else and may not be immediately apparent to communities. People-centred approaches thus bear the risk of only focusing on the immediate problems and might overlook external factors that create and contribute to the problem at hand. An example here is that –as the case studies show– addressing the housing challenge for the urban poor requires addressing the issue of land. Perspectives are therefore ideally combined and contrasted. In order to move from addressing short-term needs to creating long-term strategies, holistic needs assessments that combine top-down –for example in the form of an assessment of existing government policies and approaches as well as scientific reports and analysis– and bottom-up perspectives seem to be a promising starting point.

Lesson 2: Being prepared, proactive and ready to foresee and guide development

Given that mainstream perceptions of the urban poor are often based on negative stereotypes and a belief that they are either helpless or wholly dependent on others, demonstrating preparedness and proactiveness is of critical importance. For one, entering into discussions with other actors armed with responses to questions and hesitations, helps to better reassure, convince, and overcome potential resistance. This can come, as in the cases of Yangon and Yogyakarta, in the form of community-based settlement maps and plans, as well as through the presentation of precedents (both local and international). Relatedly, ensuring that communities are treated as equal partners requires preparation, and proactively investing in the building of their capacities, including their financial capacities. This both develops their confidence and sense of independence, and strengthens their bargaining power in negotiations.

More broadly, anticipating the larger, structural changes that take place in the city, and the ways in which these could have an impact on poor communities, is a critical part of influencing urban trajectories. Identifying development trends, such as increases in the instances of commercial development in a particular area, allows both the organisations and their partner communities to work together to organise, mobilise, connect and prepare plans, taking proactive steps to mitigate any potential damage, and to offer alternative solutions in advance.

Lesson 3: Establishing strategic partnerships

As often noted, there is strength in numbers. Establishing rich networks and

bringing people together is critical to building both momentum and support for a cause. This applies both vertically –building relationships with government– as well as horizontally –building alliances between communities across the city. It is important, however, to strategically identify those partners that best serve one’s goals, and to consider how such relationships can be established. Understanding who one is engaging and why; what one is offering versus asking for; and what one can demonstrate that will bolster their legitimacy and bargaining power, are all critical parts of the partnership-building process. Another key element is trust –enabling partnerships of equivalence to develop requires time and effort. At the start, organisations may have to negotiate, compromise, and work to convince the other parties involved, however, as highlighted earlier, demonstrating preparedness helps to expedite and support this process.

Partnerships also often develop out of informal relationships, which in many ways allows for more flexibility and understanding at the outset. However, these relationships are neither guaranteed, nor sustainable, as individuals often shift out of their professional roles into others and/or as personal relationships change over time. Working to develop more institutional partnerships, based on these initial relationships, is a critical means by which to mitigate these risks, and ensure longer-term partnerships.

Just as establishing partnerships is important, it is equally important to consider when the nature of a particular partnership requires changing. In the case of NGOs working with community-based organisations (including, in these cases, savings group networks), managing the difficult process of guiding and supporting, while also empowering and encouraging them to be independent, is crucial. Ultimately, a smooth transition is more likely to occur if communities are treated as equal members and decision-makers from the start.

Lesson 4: Recognising opportunities and cracks

At varying points in time, shifts in countries’ political, economic and social contexts can have a significant impact on the room for manoeuvre available to organisations like WfW and Arkom. These shifts can be momentary, or more long-lasting, but both offer opportunities to be capitalised on. In the case of Myanmar, for example, recent democratisation has opened up new possibilities for CSOs and communities through the state’s increased tolerance towards forms of collective mobilisation. Similarly, in light of the upcoming national elections in 2020, opportunities have arisen for WfW to collaborate more closely with local governments, as parties and politicians are eager to increase the size of their electoral base.

Now, while it is important to build on this type of momentum, it is also critical to recognise the risks involved in relying on external circumstances alone, as they are not guaranteed to remain forever in one's favour. Instances like that described above present organisations with a chance to catalyse change and set some precedents, taking advantage of favourable conditions, but doing so without losing sight of their potential ephemerality. Learning to capitalise on the opportunities that do arise, without depending too heavily on such external circumstances and factors, can result in significant positive outcomes.

Lesson 5: Adjusting internally to scale up externally

WfW and Arkom have both been able to scale up their operations and expand the scope of their work in recent years. Moving away from site-specific upgrading projects, both organisations are currently working more towards addressing structural change and expanding their reach. Whereas these changes require technical adaptations in their approach and strategy, it has also served as an opportunity for them to think about adjustments in their daily operations and the structure of their organisations. Such adaptations and (re-)negotiations are required in regard to processes, communication lines and in the organisational structure. This has encouraged internal capacity building and staff development to keep up with increased pressures. Furthermore, it has offered an opportunity to think about internal, and potentially external, knowledge management. A key challenge here is to build on existing competences and capabilities, while allowing for the exploration of new directions –assigning the leaders of these organisations as key figures within the process. An interesting starting point has been to reflect on the desired output and then work backwards to figure out how to achieve it. Cross-referencing such an analysis with existing capacities allows for a mapping of potentials and gaps and helps to create an environment where people can do their best work.

*Fig 69. (facing page)
A historic building in
Kampung Taman, a kampung
near the Sultan's palace
which is home to current
and past servants of the
Sultanate of Yogyakarta.
Fig 70. (next page) View over
the Taw Win settlement,
where the first family added
a second floor to their house.*





Afterword

A word from DPU

The premises of learning by doing and partnerships with equivalence underpin the DPU/ACHR/CAN internship programme. This publication is testament of the enriching trajectories of mutual learning among our alumni and partner organisations in a long-term process of cultivating professional opportunities for development practitioners in the Global South. The internship has become a platform to reflect on current practices that promote people-centred development. Thus, *Grounded Learning* emerges from a systematic reflection on the experiences of young professionals immersed in community-based practices. This reflection engages with the lived experience of interns as well as the contextual understanding of different organisational cultures.

This volume captures the interaction and learning processes of four DPU alumni with local institutions as generative spaces for reflective practice. The interns worked respectively for the first time in **Yogyakarta**, Indonesia with **Arkom** and for second time in **Yangon**, Myanmar with **Women for the World**. Both partner organisations have at their core community-based mobilisation and advocacy around housing rights in contexts where democratization processes are challenging and in political transition. They have built different organisational strategies for navigating complex urban governance settings. They work with different collectives to enable the recognition of the multiple knowledges pertaining to housing, socio-material infrastructures and livelihoods that shape Yangon and Yogyakarta.

This booklet raises a comparative reflection that defines a set of trans-local learning lessons about people centred development practices. This volume explores across cases two relevant streams of our partners' work: *bridging scales* and *exploring alternatives trajectories*. *Bridging scales*

harness our understanding on the strategies and shortcoming to aim at amplifying impact and link political spheres of mobilization; while *exploring alternatives trajectories* refer to the experimental work around practices of community-led housing and collective land tenure arrangements yet to be institutionalised. For The Bartlett Development Planning Unit supporting the DPU/ACHR/CAN internship programme is part of our commitment to promote spaces to mobilise knowledge into action for more just cities and as such documenting the internship experiences is part of our imperative.

by Dr. Catalina Ortiz and Dr. Barbara Lipietz

Reflections by Women for the World

1. How does the fellowship program contribute to WfW's work?

We expect the fellowship to be a space for learning; the fellows can exchange knowledge and learn while supporting as a human resource for the organization. As any human experience, the relations depend on the participants and the priorities we have each year. For instance, the first year we worked hard for preparing community engagement by doing data collection and organizing the community itself- and in the second year we started working more on the implementation phase of our housing projects. According to the stages, the engagement depends on the participants, and how much they contribute according to their background too.

Here, on the ground, what we are doing is very unique. The knowledge is with us, the knowledge doesn't come from any framework, here we practice. We are creating this methodology. Actually, people have to come and learn, and when they really give time, they will understand. Normally, the fellows that are here understand, this process needs to be deeply understood. Our aim is that people that come and do an internship, can learn deeply. But that knowledge does not come only through listening and observing. If you don't engage you don't get the knowledge; if you engage yourself, you get it. This is the working style. Because of that, this kind of program supports our organization; if you get the knowledge, if you understand, you can find a way to support this process.

2. What role does the fellowship play in WfW's strategic positioning (short and long-term)?

The fellows are learning the knowledge, engaging the knowledge, finding the new knowledge. This program comes from an academic perspective. Here many people work as practitioners, the fellows come with the knowledge of academia. So, when they engage the practical with their knowledge, this is their main role; to adapt their knowledge and to reframe this knowledge.

3. What are the key benefits and challenges of this fellowship programme for WfW?

The key benefit is that these fellows are like a bridge, and they are one of the stakeholders. Because they come with the academic experience to the ground. Then they start to link this academic theory to the grounded practice. Then, everyone can start to understand; from academic perspective they can see, and also from the other sector, this is becoming like a snowballing effect, like mixing. That is very important, this is the reason we link with academics to the ground. And then we bring many professionals and academic people, we start working in this program. The big challenge is that it is time consuming. It is not a very easy job; it is linked with practice. If one is not inside the process, they will not learn, and then the theoretic knowledge cannot be put into use. Big challenge; but if the fellows can do it, it is not a challenge. If they can engage, if they find by themselves how to play in this process, they will not feel "Oh, I don't know what this is!" That is the challenge.

That's why engaging themselves in the process is very important. There is no alarm. The process itself is like that. We are working in the practical change. We do this output; there is land, there is infrastructure, this many people get housing. But from this output, we have to reflect on what change do we need. What kind of changes we want to see? The output is very big. We deliver with financial and everything, and the output is already here, very visible, but what changes with this output? We cannot just enjoy with the output. We build many housing projects; we do many activities. Through this, we need to be asking ourselves what changes can we make in the society? And to what extent through a particular project we can see a lot of change happening. From the top, decision-makers start working with the ground. Many stakeholders from the government sector, MPs are already involving, that means we unlock the bureaucratic system. We start to coordinate. People find their own space. Different stakeholders start working for very poor people, so these people start getting the services and care. Through

this process we adjust the structure, this is how we shape a democratic practice. And the society, the media are excited, it can be done. Attitude changes, behaviour changes, people start seeing this is possible. This change is very important. So, for the fellows, this program has to be understood, and engagement has to go beyond the activity. Then the fellows could learn, but the challenge is that it takes time, so it needs long-term investment to understand these processes.

Reflections by Arkom

1. How does the fellowship program contribute to Arkom's work?

At first, we thought that this fellowship program was only intended to prepare a fieldtrip to be conducted by DPU-UCL students. However, when the participants of this fellowship program (Nada & Katrin) arrived, they asked deeper and detailed about Arkom and what work they could do for Arkom. Arkom, who at that time was taking the first steps to become an NGO that could represent research as the basis of its activities (in this case, research on the typology of slums as a basis for realising security for the community) and was in an effort to conduct knowledge management at the organisational level, was very helped by the existence of this fellowship program. The Arkom staff have been accustomed to being practitioners and it is sometimes difficult to document it into writing, even more so to analyse it. The existence of this fellowship program makes the Arkom staff able to learn more about systematising the mindset of practitioners into a research framework that tends to be academic. When cooperating with foreign universities, Arkom has up to now been a classroom and learning space for the universities' students. But for the fieldtrip program that was carried out with DPU-UCL, it had a different concept, in which Arkom was the main partner in the fieldtrip activities. The existence of the fellowship that was brought in three months before the fieldtrip helped Arkom to have a clear reflection and preparation before the fieldtrip was carried out.

2. What role does the fellowship play in Arkom's strategic positioning (short and long-term)?

This October, Arkom will officially have a new, more visionary vision, mission and form of organisation. This was done with the aim of making a clear system of Arkom's performance in carrying out programs to keep it in line

with the organisation's strategic plan. In the update, Arkom will have a new department that deals with knowledge management and the creative economy. In this year's fellowship program, we have learned a lot about how to identify and communicate with donors in running our programmes. In the future, this fellowship program can help Arkom to be able to systematise the strategic plan of the existing departments to be able to write proposals for activities that can be supported by donor agencies. Furthermore, we can see how fellows can be directed to support the process of knowledge management, helping to write-up best practices and lessons learned from various processes that have been carried out. In addition, we can see a role for fellows in helping to support Arkom's research and analytical activities, for example, in the current context of the KNOW research programme where Arkom is collaborating with DPU and ACHR.

3. What are the key benefits and challenges of this fellowship programme for Arkom?

The presence of fellowships in the Arkom work environment represents a new enthusiasm for staff to be able to work better. The fellowship programme also represents an opportunity in terms of working with government: given the perception in Indonesia of foreigners as educated and competent professionals, having DPU/ACHR fellows on board provides us with a new forum, a bargaining chip when engaging with government. In moving the spirit of the community, the existence of fellowships is also very influential. Although this must be in line with the power of Arkom to be a translator when fellows meet with the community.



Fig. 71. Puppet maker in
Taman Sari

About Us

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Fig 72. Commonly, the entrance to a neighbourhood, community or village is marked by a big tree - this is from a low-income settlement in South Dagon, Aung Zaw Moe

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